

# DN disabilitynow

the campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

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## Civil disobedience to hit big charities

DN EXCLUSIVE BY NUALA CALVI

Disabled activists are planning to “hit” major London charities in a series of direct action protests calling for them to stop speaking on behalf of disabled people.

Members of the Disabled People’s Direct Action Network (DAN), who have been known to handcuff themselves to railings in Downing Street, say targets could include Scope, Mencap, Leonard Cheshire, RNIB, RNID and the MS Society.

They say the protests will be non-violent, but members will be “prepared to break the law” to get their message across.

Andy Gill, DAN national organiser, said: “We feel these organisations have had a long history of claiming to be representing, and doing nothing but misrepresenting, the views of disabled people.

“How can they represent us if they are warehousing and

incarcerating disabled people in institutions and actively denying those people the opportunity of speaking for themselves?

“We are going to send the direct message to charities and government that charities and disabled people’s rights do not go together. Charities are over, as far as we’re concerned.”

Mike Oliver, professor of disability studies at the University of Greenwich and DAN member, said the costly lobbying departments of major charities allowed them to speak as the “legitimate” voice of disabled people and shut out disabled people’s own organisations.

“The point is how that makes disabled people feel. They become passive, or they don’t feel they’re clever enough because they’re not experts or professionals.”

Both Scope and Mencap said they were unable to comment at this stage.

The action will take place

over three days from 27 October and culminate in a lobby of parliament on the Disabled People’s Rights and Freedoms Bill, sponsored by MP Roger Berry.

The bill, drawn up by disabled people’s organisations, is the focus of the newly reformed Our Rights Now (ORN), the umbrella group of campaigning organisations formerly known as Rights Now (DN May).

Andy Rickell, the new ORN chair, said the group would provide a way for organisations “of” disabled people, which are less well off than big charities, to pool their resources.

Several large charities have not yet renewed their membership of the group since it became an organisation “of” disabled people.

Campaigners have warned charities they risk losing touch with the disabled campaigning community if they do not join. See also page 15.

## ‘Survivors’ not included

Inclusive education campaigners claim the government’s consultation on the future of special schools failed to include the views of disabled people who have experienced them.

The Alliance for Inclusive Education and Parents for Inclusion said no organisations run by disabled people were asked to contribute.

They said the government recommendations on the future of special schools will have “significant influence over the lives of a whole new generation of young disabled people”.

The groups organised a

meeting of Department for Education and Skills (DfES) officials and special school “survivors” two days after the official end of the consultation, following the rejection of a request for government funding.

It heard from disabled people of the “dehumanising” and “damaging” experience of being educated separately.

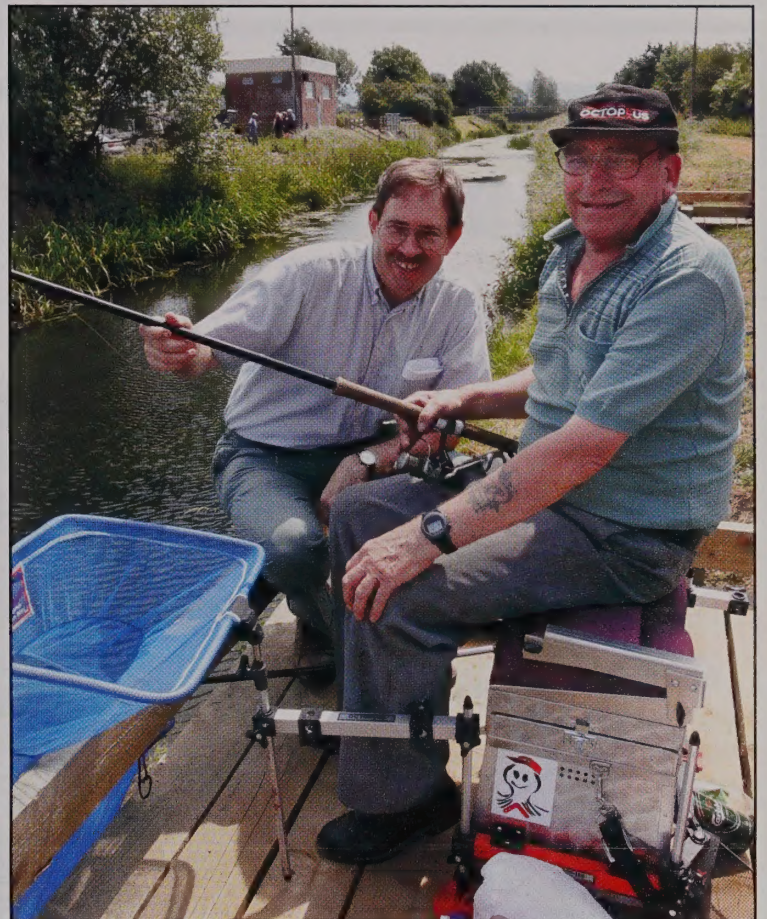
Maresa MacKeith, for example, said: “The experience of being hidden away, with the assumption that I was worthless, still haunts me with a terror I can’t describe.”

And Haq Ismail said: “The

three month consultation period is too short – like a guillotine for disabled people. It should be much longer. And where was it publicised? I didn’t know about it.”

A DfES spokeswoman said the government had consulted widely with stakeholders in the past and continues to do so.

“The government’s policy of inclusion has been widely endorsed. The assumption is that pupils should be taught in mainstream settings wherever possible. But this won’t be right for all pupils. Nor is it what all parents want.”



Angling for improvements: visually-impaired angler Bert Tilling, pictured with MP David Drew, tests out a new fishery for disabled anglers on the River Cam, funded by the Environment Agency. It has 13 angling platforms, 250 metres of wheelchair access and will be leased for a nominal rent to Gloucestershire Disabled Angling Club.

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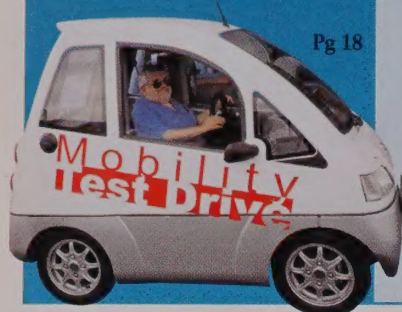
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On the cover: Billy “the Whizz” Baxter hopes to smash the Blind Solo World Land Speed Record on a Kawasaki motorcycle on 2 August by riding at speeds of over 150mph. Billy, a former staff sergeant of the Royal Horse Artillery, who lost his sight in 1987, is raising money for St Dunstan’s Blind Ambition campaign, to pay for training and care of other blind ex-service men and women. Tel: 01980 592935.



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## Quality vehicles for wheelchair users



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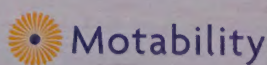
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# Jobcentre shock

DN EXCLUSIVE BY JOHN PRING

Two learning disabled people have had their benefits books ripped up in front of them by a Jobcentre Plus officer who decided they couldn't look after their own finances.

Another tenant from the same flat in Gateshead, Evelyn West, also had her benefits book removed by Jobcentre Plus in February and was unable to access her Disability Living Allowance for several months.

The two other tenants, Kevin Murray and Wendy Berry, have had to live off their savings

since the incident in June.

The trio had been cashing their benefits at the Post Office since September, with the help of support staff. They pay all their own bills.

Murray said he liked handling his own benefits and paying his rent. "I pay my own rent and I still haven't got my own book back. I want to get it back. I like it handling it myself."

Jean Collins, director of Values Into Action, which campaigns with people with learning difficulties, said: "This goes against absolutely everything that is in *Valuing People* [the

Department of Health's (DOH) 2001 white paper] which is all about people being supported to be as independent as they possibly can be."

Gateshead Council is to ask Jobcentre Plus to reassess the trio and any similar cases.

A Department for Work and Pensions spokeswoman said it was standard practice to immediately destroy benefits books if there was a risk to benefits.

She said the department regularly liaised with the DOH on services for learning disabled people but would not say if it had done so on this issue.



Potted history: John Carpenter, a horticultural trainee with SHARE, stands beside a planter he made at the launch of a £10,000 scheme to improve the charity's community garden at Springfield Hospital, south London. SHARE trains disabled people in areas such as IT, business skills and horticulture.

## DN CAMPAIGN



# Biz trial shelved

Disabled campaigner Biz Ivol told DN she is "really peed off" that Scottish prosecutors decided she was unfit to continue with her trial for growing, using and supplying cannabis.

Ivol, who has multiple sclerosis, has always admitted to making cannabis-based chocolates to ease the conditions of other disabled people.

Scotland's Crown Office said the decision not to proceed with her trial was based purely on a medical report, and was not influenced by Ivol's ongoing campaign to legalise cannabis.

But Ivol said: "I wanted it to

go to the High Court in Edinburgh, then the European Court."

On the day the decision was taken early last month, Ivol took an overdose of Paracetamol, but was found the next morning and taken to hospital.

Since the trial began, Ivol has received hundreds of letters from other disabled people asking for help and information about cannabis.

She has decided to stop making the chocolates herself, but two other campaigners in the north of England will now make them instead.

# Remploy responds

Representatives of disabled workers at Remploy have told the minister for disabled people that its factories are being left to "run themselves" while deadlines for orders are missed and the company's deficit grows.

The consortium of trade union officers and workers told Maria Eagle MP the company lacked "vision and leadership" and called for a say in the appointment of its new chief executive.

The consortium was "stunned" to learn Remploy received a cash injection this

year of £21m - £3m more than estimated - yet has not resolved a dispute for a £20 a week pay rise for disabled workers.

Remploy said it was discussing the issues with unions and was hopeful of a positive resolution of the pay dispute. It said unions had been "fully briefed" on the £21m grant.

A statement said Remploy's sales turnover increased by 5 per cent in 2002-03 and losses were eliminated. It denied previous claims it had "sold off the family silver" and said it had built new factories on nine of its sites.

## In brief

### Run for parliament

Disabled people can still nominate themselves to become members of the first UK Disabled People's Parliament.

The parliament, set up by the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP), will first meet on 4 and 5 October in Birmingham.

Contact BCODP on 01332 295551 or [www.bdocp.org.uk](http://www.bdocp.org.uk) before August 18.

### No role models

A lack of role models is stopping young disabled people from becoming teachers, according to research by the University of Wales College, Newport.


The unpublished research found many teachers have disabilities, but don't disclose them. It said they need to be encouraged to "come out" to show that disabled people can teach and have support.

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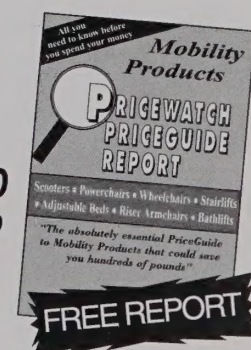
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# MPs called to action

Pressure is mounting on the government to introduce its promised disability bill as campaigners warn it is "running out of time".

Chief executives of 15 major charities have signed a letter to be sent to every MP calling for support for the bill to be included in the Queen's Speech this November.

An early day motion in support of the request, sponsored by Roger Berry, Paul Holmes and Peter Bottomley, has been signed by more than 70 MPs.

Major trade unions have

also joined the campaign, with a petition already signed by thousands of members.

Campaigners hope the bill will extend the Disability Discrimination Act by recognising people with HIV and cancer as disabled and by placing duties on landlords and transport companies. These changes, recommended by a government taskforce in 1999, were absent from last year's Queen's Speech.

Even if the draft bill is tabled for the next parliamentary session, a scrutiny process could

delay the bill until 2005-6. If a general election is called, it could be lost completely.

Caroline Ellis, RNID parliamentary policy officer, said: "If we leave it any longer, it could run into the building of the single equality body and we have all said we want comprehensive rights before that happens."

Meanwhile, the Disability Rights Commission\* is holding a consultation on its future campaigning priorities.

\*To have your say, visit [www.drc.org.uk/campaigns/strategicplanconsult.asp](http://www.drc.org.uk/campaigns/strategicplanconsult.asp)



Pressure point: T&G general secretary Sir Bill Morris joins representatives from the union's disability advisory committee to launch a petition calling for the disability bill to be brought into force no later than 2004.

## DN CAMPAIGN



# Manhandling alert

Disabled people who are "manhandled" when boarding planes are being urged to report their cases to an access expert.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) decided it was not safe to carry disabled passengers in wheelchairs up steep steps and issued two improvement notices late last year against PACE Airfield Services

at Stansted Airport.

Stansted now boards passengers in wheelchairs by using moveable corridors or lifting equipment. But Uttlesford Access Group, which contacted the HSE, is concerned that some airports still use unsafe methods.

Disabled people should report such cases to Alun Francis at RADAR on 020 7250 3222.

# Draft bill raises doubts

Campaigners have warned that the government's proposed new Mental Incapacity Bill poses a grave risk to the rights of people with learning difficulties.

The bill, out for consultation\*, would affect people with conditions such as dementia and learning difficulties, and is intended to give disabled people in England and Wales the power to make more decisions.

The draft bill presumes all adults can make decisions for

themselves on issues such as money and health and says that "all practicable steps" must be taken to help someone make a decision before they can be regarded as lacking capacity.

But Values Into Action (VIA), which campaigns with people with learning difficulties, warned that one measure was "outrageous". It would create a "general authority" to decide for someone who lacks capacity, if reasonable and in

their best interests.

Jean Collins, director of VIA, said: "It is really going to make it incredibly difficult for many, many people with learning difficulties to control the direction of their own lives."

Steve Broach, of the National Autistic Society, welcomed the bill, but said there was concern over what it meant by "all practicable steps" and added there was a need for advocacy.

\* [www.lcd.gov.uk/menincap](http://www.lcd.gov.uk/menincap)

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# PA no-show misery

DN EXCLUSIVE BY NUALA CALVI

Disabled people who have taken up direct payments are being left to "sink or swim" in emergencies.

Support groups around the country have told DN that members find themselves unable to find and pay for reliable agency cover when personal assistants (PAs) fail to turn up or are sick.

One woman from Macclesfield reportedly wheels herself to the local pub to find a stranger to help put her to bed when her PA doesn't show up.

David Strong, manager of Disability Advice Service,

Lambeth, said a council investigation found emergency cover was a problem.

"Some people have staff on call, but others have to go to agencies.

"Usually, the money is not enough to cover agencies, which cost £9 an hour plus. People often have to go back to social services for a one-off sum to cover it. They allow some people that but not all."

Peter St Clair, direct payments advisor for Dorset and Somerset, said disabled people could only afford low-standard agency cover because payments were too low.

He added: "It's a big prob-

lem getting good quality care and cover for care. There just isn't the staff there."

He called for a back-up register of carers who would be available at short notice through an emergency hotline.

Francis Hasler, chief executive of the National Centre for Independent Living, said some support groups had started to keep lists of PAs available for short-term work. But some local authorities had not "got to grips with helping people sort out contingency plans."

Most disabled people were budgeting on £7.50 an hour, with agency rates "well in excess of that", she said.



Finger food: a braille menu at Brewer's Fayre pub in Edinburgh is an example of how Capability Scotland's new Equality Unit will help businesses attract disabled customers and meet their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. See [www.capability-scotland.org.uk/advice\\_info/equality\\_unit/equality\\_unit.htm](http://www.capability-scotland.org.uk/advice_info/equality_unit/equality_unit.htm)



Backhanded complements: Shannon Finn and Alex Miller took part in a tennis workshop during family day at the National Deaf Children's Society's 15th annual exhibition in Telford, Shropshire.

## Badge scheme undermined

Abuse, fraud and theft of blue badges is undermining the disabled parking scheme and threatening disabled people's independence, but badge holders must not abuse the service, according to a charity.

Mary Grace, chairman of the Blue Badge Network, said badges were being stolen from cars and sold for £700 on the black market.

But she also told members at a House of Commons meeting that disabled people must not lend their badges to family

and friends. "It's a concession, not a right. What we abuse, we will lose. To lose that parking permit would be dreadful," she said.

Tony McNulty MP, the newly appointed junior transport minister with responsibility for the mobility and inclusion unit, said he shared concerns that the scheme was becoming devalued.

He confirmed that the government was working on a new bill and would introduce it "at the earliest opportunity".

The bill would give parking attendants power to inspect blue badges and could also see fines or points on driving licences for abuse of the scheme.

Tim Boswell MP, Conservative spokesman on disability, said there needed to be a change in culture so that non-disabled people realise it's not acceptable to abuse the blue badge scheme.

"If it becomes as unacceptable as drink driving, we will have got a lot further forward," he said.

### In brief

#### All-party first

The first all-party parliamentary group on learning disability will meet this autumn.

Over 60 MPs and peers have agreed to be members of the group, set up by learning disability charity Mencap. It aims to pressure the government to fulfil the promises of its *Valuing People* white paper on learning disability.

#### Ten-year organ plan

The government has launched a ten-year plan to increase the number of people on the Organ Donor Register from 10.5 million to 16 million.

*Saving Lives, Valuing Donors: a Transplant Framework for England\** will encourage people to carry a donor card, and try to raise the quality of transplant services.

\*[www.doh.gov.uk/transplant-framework](http://www.doh.gov.uk/transplant-framework)

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# New homes, little access

Inaccessible houses are still being built because designers and builders are ignoring legislation, new research shows.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation research found a high proportion of new housing does not incorporate Part M Building Regulations, which state that new houses must be accessible.

The research found that regulations were often disregarded and, when taken into account, were often done in a half-hearted and tokenistic way.

Many builders also believed that a quota of accessible housing was enough to satisfy the legislation.

This was reinforced by local authorities' leniency when enforcing the regulations.

Professor Rob Imrie, author of the report, said designers thought of the standards as best practice, rather than the minimum standards they are.

## Bill amended

Disabled people have won a major victory in their right to take part in the "communications revolution" following concessions from the government over its Communications Bill.

The bill, which outlines the duties and powers of Ofcom, the new regulator for the communications industry, was amended during its passage through the House of Lords to include a right for disabled people to access information.

Disabled people will now have a say on Ofcom's plans through an advisory committee. Ofcom has also been given powers to insist on high standards from broadcasters on accessibility.

Subtitling targets have been increased and cable and satellite broadcasters now have to

"I hope that the research will add to the pressure on government to recognise that housing is about the creation of liveable spaces that should be usable to all regardless of impairment," he said.

Meanwhile, the Department for Transport has published an access guide\* for buildings, open spaces and streets.

A Disability Rights Commission spokesman welcomed the guide, written for the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, and said: "We have been angling for access to be included at the planning stage. This is a way of pushing that forward. We are fully in favour of it."

*\*Inclusive Projects – a best practice guide on preparing and delivering project briefs to secure access, available free from the Department for Transport, tel: 0870 1226 2367.*

subtitle 60 per cent of their programmes within five years and 80 per cent after ten years. Broadcasters must also publicise these services.

Although audio description targets were not included, Caroline Ellis, parliamentary officer for the Royal National Institute of the Blind, said they were "really pleased" with the bill.

"We have the framework, but there's still a lot more to be done in practical terms to make sure it all turns out OK in reality."

John Low, chief executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, said: "The government's decision to revolutionise subtitling requirements will dramatically extend access and choice for millions of people across the UK."



Who, me?: Endal, DN's May cover dog, receives the news that he has been voted the UK's Coolest Canine by Direct Line. He and his pals from Assistance Dogs UK visited the Houses of Parliament last month to call for assistance dogs to be funded as part of disabled people's care packages.

## DN CAMPAIGN Police err again

A Hertfordshire policeman allegedly ignored advice from police chiefs and parked in a disabled bay to go shopping.

Michael Gould, from Hertfordshire, saw the police car and tried to confront the policeman as he came out of Marks and Spencer with a shopping bag at Brookfield Centre, Cheshunt, in May.

Gould said the policeman ignored him and drove away.

"I think the police should be showing an example. Why should the police be allowed to get away with it?" he said.

The case followed an incident last year in which another Hertfordshire policeman accidentally ran over a disabled woman's toe after she asked why he was parked in a disabled bay.

That incident was investigated by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA), which found the officer was not guilty of misconduct but recommended officers receive advice about disabled bays.

A Hertfordshire Constabulary spokeswoman said the PCA advice had been passed on to officers, but this advice had been "open to interpretation" and more explicit advice was issued after the latest incident.

She said: "Disabled parking bays should not be used unless in an emergency."

The Association of Chief Police Officers told police chiefs last year to remind officers to only use disabled bays in emergencies, after DN drew attention to the problem.

## In brief

### Housing help

A new web-site specialises in accessible and adapted properties for sale and rent.

The Accessible Property Register\* accepts adverts from individuals, businesses and other organisations and advertising is currently free.

It was developed by wheelchair user Christine Barton and her partner, freelance journalist Conrad Hodkinson.

\*[www.accessible-property.org.uk](http://www.accessible-property.org.uk)

### Correction

In a story in last month's DN about broadcasters' failure to show more disabled people on screen ("Kept off screen", page six), we mistakenly referred to John Low, chief executive of the RNID, as Colin Low.

Colin Low is chairman of the RNIB.



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# Key findings go unreported

DN EXCLUSIVE BY JOHN PRING

A government watchdog has criticised the Cabinet Office for failing to publish a report on how to increase the numbers of disabled people on public bodies.

Dame Rennie Fritchie, commissioner for public appointments, was a member of a working party set up by the Government to increase diversity in public appointments.

The working party sent its recommendations to the Cabinet Office early this year, but is still waiting for the report to be published.

Dame Rennie told DN: "I am very disappointed. I urge people to get on with it now."

She was speaking as she published her annual report\*, which revealed that the number of people declaring a disability who were appointed or re-appointed to public bodies in 2002-03 fell from 2.9 per cent to 2.7 per cent, although at the same time the number of dis-

abled chairs rose from 1.1 to 2.7 per cent.

She said: "If you really want to make a difference, you need to do more than *ad hoc* projects from time to time."

"There needs to be a concerted and concentrated campaign over several years."

Dame Rennie said the working party called for a census of all public appointees to find out how many were disabled and also said the government should address the problem of people losing disability benefits once they are paid for public posts.

These calls were mirrored by the public administration select committee last month, which also urged the government to do "much more" to encourage disabled people to apply for posts.

A Cabinet Office spokeswoman said the working party recommendations were "being considered".

\*[www.ocpa.gov.uk](http://www.ocpa.gov.uk) or tel 020 72762625



Language of the street: nearly 4,000 deaf people marched through London to call for new laws to protect British Sign Language (BSL). The Federation of Deaf People's fourth national march on 5 July was partly a celebration of the government's announcement in March that BSL was to be recognised as an official language. But marchers also called for an act to give BSL users the right to use the language.

## £1.5k bill warning over phone system

A blind man is warning disabled people that signing up to a telephone-based email and information service could leave them with huge phone bills.

Alan Harmsworth was appalled when he realised his latest quarterly phone bill was £1,700, about £1,500 of which was due to use of the PhoneAnything.com service.

PhoneAnything translates internet, wap sites and emails into voice messages, with users navigating via a telephone keypad.

It targets visually impaired

people, and is working with the Royal National Institute of the Blind to develop an information service for people without computers and screen readers.

Harmsworth, who is on Disability Living Allowance, will now have to extend a bank loan to pay off his bills.

He admits he has used the service for up to 10 hours a day. Only 1p per minute of his calls will go to PhoneAnything, though, with the rest being pocketed by BT.

"I wouldn't use it unless you are working and earning a

great deal of money," he said.

The service used to be run on a local rate number but has moved to national rates because it was losing money.

Stefan Haselwimmer, managing director of PhoneAnything, said most people use it for about ten minutes a day and Harmsworth's use was "excessive". But he admitted the cost was "a problem" and advised customers to be "careful how you use it".

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# Tears as Shopmobility closes

Shops could become a no-go area for more than 500 disabled people following the closure of a Shopmobility scheme in Wiltshire.

Trowbridge Shopmobility is to close because of a lack of funding and a £6,000 deficit. The linked advocacy service will also close and all equipment will be sold.

Geraldine Bentley, coordina-

tor of Trowbridge Shopmobility, said while some schemes receive more than £100,000 in council funding, West Wiltshire District Council (WWDC) had refused them the £20,000 they needed. WWDC was the largest funding partner, giving Shopmobility a yearly grant of £2,500.

Bentley said: "It's just been dreadful. We have had people in tears. For many of our cus-

tomers it's the only time they get out in the whole week."

A spokeswoman for WWDC said the Shopmobility scheme, which had 530 registered users, asked for more money in May after they had agreed their budget and so had no spare funds.

"We are completely committed to mobility services in Trowbridge but we have only got a very limited amount

of money available."

Trowbridge Town Council also provided Shopmobility funding and a spokesman said: "We are looking at other ideas and how quickly we can put something back in its place."

Anne Ansell, of the National Federation of Shopmobility, said it was vital to convince councils and shopping centres to fund schemes.

## New code to fight rogue traders

A new code of practice\* could be "a milestone" in the battle to prevent the mis-selling of assistive products to disabled people.

The British Healthcare Trades Association has published a draft version of a code for consultation and hopes to have it approved by the Office of Fair Trading. If approved, the code will have legally enforceable sanctions.

Its publication came after a string of critical reports last year accused some firms of employing high pressure sales techniques.

The draft version of the code of practice includes recommendations for a minimum seven-day "cooling-off period", which would allow customers a week to return the product if they decided it was not suitable.

And it would stop companies making misleading claims and using high pressure sales techniques.

Maggie Winchcombe, acting chief executive of the Disabled Living Centres Council, welcomed the draft code and predicted that companies that did not sign up to it would become "increasingly isolated".

"It's very comprehensive and I welcome the opportunity to support an initiative that will help our users in our network feel more confident about who they might recommend to prospective customers."

Ray Hogkinson, director general of the BHTA, said: "I think it is going to be a milestone for the industry."

\*Email [bhta@bhta.com](mailto:bhta@bhta.com) or call 01732 458868



Pointing the way: charity Sense launched Reach Out\*, a campaign to encourage councils to implement government guidance on meeting the needs of deafblind people. \*[www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

## Providers to be accountable

A new law that would strip contracts from public service providers if they didn't meet the needs of disabled people has been given the go-ahead by European MPs.

The European Parliament has voted to revise EU legislation on public procurement which would make local authorities include access requirements in

public contracts for services, supplies and transport.

The law would plug some holes in the Disability Discrimination Act but needs national government support to come into force.

Richard Howitt MEP said it was "one of the most important pieces of legislation of the last five years".

## News Review

**A monthly round-up of news from the mainstream media**

### Pill will cut strokes

Research published by the British Medical Journal suggested that a "polypill", made up of six different drugs and vitamins, would cut heart attacks and strokes by at least 80 per cent if taken daily by every person over 55.

### Gene research boost

The Department of Health published a £50 million strategy\* aimed at developing genetics knowledge, skills and provision in the NHS over the next three years.

It included up to £3 million to support gene therapy research on single gene disorders.

\*[www.doh.gov.uk/genetics/wbitepaper.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/genetics/wbitepaper.htm)

### DDA job victory

A landmark court ruling found that people are protected by employment discrimination laws, including the Disability Discrimination Act, even after they have left their jobs.

The House of Lords ruling on six test cases included four disabled people supported by the Disability Rights Commission.

It found that the four could take action against former employers who refused or provided unfair job references.

### Negligence report

The government's chief medical officer set out proposals to "fundamentally reform" the way NHS clinical negligence cases are dealt with.

The report\*, out for consultation, suggests setting up a new scheme to provide investigations; treatment, rehabilitation and care; explanations and apologies; and financial compensation if appropriate.

\*[www.doh.gov.uk/makingamends](http://www.doh.gov.uk/makingamends)

### Look to the long-term

The NHS Confederation called on new Secretary of State for Health, Dr John Reid, to shift government policy away from focusing on elective, or planned, surgery and waiting times and towards the needs of the 17.5 million people with long-term conditions such as asthma, arthritis and depression.

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# No lifting rules make GP trips a 'nightmare'

A disabled woman says visits to her GP's surgery and hospital have become "a nightmare" because of nurses' no-lifting policies.

Mary Harrison, from Balham, south-west London, who has spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), was only able to have a routine smear test because she brought her own sliding board to the surgery.

Although Balham Health Centre has an adjustable couch, it has no lifting equipment.

Harrison fears other disabled people are facing similar problems and missing out on treatment at surgeries, dentists and opticians.

She said: "It makes me feel angry but also horrible.

"If I hadn't had my board, I don't know what would have happened. I just wonder how others manage.

"It is like I am being held responsible for the fact that some people have done their backs in. It's up to me to find a solution."

Dr Robert Oulton, senior partner at the health centre, said nurses had a policy of not lifting anyone needing such assistance but had been keen for her to have a test.

He said: "These cases are few and far between. Hoists are not cheap pieces of equipment."

A Wandsworth Primary Care Trust spokeswoman said it had no written "no-lifting" policy but some nurses preferred not to lift patients.

Some staff will lift patients, or patients are asked to bring their own equipment or attend an appointment at a location with suitable lifting equipment.

Carol Morgan, of The Jennifer Trust for Spinal Muscular Atrophy, said: "I personally do not know of any GP surgery that has lifting equipment.

"Why should women in wheelchairs not be able to get to their GPs and have a smear?"



'It makes me feel angry': Mary Harrison, at her Balham home

## Epilepsy drugs OK'd by NICE Pain barrier broken

The government's health advice body has recommended that the newer generation of epilepsy drugs be used for both children and adults, if older treatments do not work first.

The preliminary recommendations from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has now been put out for public consultation, which

was due to end on 15 July.

NICE's appraisal consultation document said the newer drugs should be used to manage epilepsy in children and adults who do not benefit from established anti-epileptic drugs.

It also said that children and adults should be treated with only one anti-epileptic drug if

possible and should be seen by an epilepsy specialist as soon as possible after a first seizure. Treatment should be reviewed at regular intervals.

A spokeswoman for the charity Epilepsy Action said: "We are currently working with our clinical advisors and with the Joint Epilepsy Council on a detailed response to NICE."

A medical charity has devised a method of assessing pain felt by children who find it difficult to communicate with their parents and health professionals.

Action Research devised the Paediatric Pain Profile (PPP) scale with funds from the National Lottery's Community Fund, after a survey of 300 parents and interviews with parents and health professionals.

Nearly half of the parents said their children were in pain every day, with about 20 per cent of children in severe or very severe daily pain.

The scale is aimed at helping the 10,000 or so children with severe movement and learning

impairments who are cared for by their parents and often have pain such as heartburn, earache and hip dislocation.

It features 20 different 'pain cues', which include changes in posture, facial expression and mood, different movements and sounds, and changes in sleep or eating patterns.

Dr Ann Goldman, consultant in palliative care at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, one of the centres leading the research, said: "Children often receive less effective pain management than adults simply because they are not able to articulate how they are feeling."

## 'Overlooked' patients get specialist nurse

An NHS trust has become the second in the country to appoint a nurse to specialise in working with disabled patients.

Chris Wiseman has been appointed to the disability nurse specialist position with Essex Rivers Healthcare, with funding from The Rank Foundation and disability charity John Grooms.

She will promote the needs of physically disabled patients at Colchester General and Essex County Hospitals and ensure there is enough specialist equipment available.

She said: "It is sometimes all too easy on a busy ward to forget to take the time to listen to physically disabled patients and only to see their disability."

Wiseman said there had been frequent examples of the needs of disabled people being "overlooked" in the NHS, such as quadriplegic people being given a button to press to summon help or asked to sign forms.

If the experiment proves a success, the trust will take over funding the post after two years.

Sheila Flynn, general manager of John Grooms' eastern office, said: "We believe that a disability nurse specialist could effect a positive difference in attitude and care practices within the hospital setting, benefiting both patients and staff."

A John Grooms spokesman said: "If this pilot project is successful, it is something we will look to expand in the future."



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# Tackling hate crime

The Scottish Executive is considering creating a new offence of "hate crime" against disabled people as part of a drive to tackle crimes motivated by prejudice.

Campaigners have long called for legislation to match that on racially aggravated crime and laws introduced last year in Scotland on religious hatred.

Disabled people's organisations have joined a working group set up in June to look at bringing in similar laws on crimes aggravated by sexuality, age, gender and disability.

Simon Bradstreet, of the Scottish Association for Mental

Health, said the need for legislation had been speeded up by recent high-profile cases in Scotland such as that of "Miss X", a learning disabled woman who was raped and tortured by three men.

"At the moment, these offences are not recorded anywhere. This would mean they would be monitored and someone could get a more hefty sentence if they repeatedly commit crimes against disabled people."

But he warned of the danger of creating a "victim culture" if legislation was to cover crimes against groups considered more "vulnerable".

Meanwhile, Scottish Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson introduced a bill guaranteeing adjustments to the legal system for people with "mental disorders".

The Vulnerable Witnesses Bill will make it a statutory requirement for courts to find out if there are vulnerable witnesses who may need to give evidence by video link or with the help of a supporter.

Scottish learning disability charity Enable welcomed the removal of the competency test, which has acted as a "screening process", ruling out people who were not considered competent witnesses.



Word on the street: a new "talking lampposts" system to help visually impaired people find their way around was unveiled in London's Golders Green. The system, sponsored by the Royal National Institute of the Blind, uses message units mounted on walls or posts that make announcements when card-carrying users walk past.

## DDA delays

The Equality Commission of Northern Ireland has warned that disability legislation for the province has slipped behind the rest of the UK and is in danger of failing to catch up because of the suspension of its governing assembly.

Although the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) applies to Northern Ireland, provisions on education, transport and taxis have not yet been enacted.

Bill Halliday, director of the Equality Commission's disability unit, said: "We're starting to see Northern Ireland's disability legislation slipping behind."

"It's very important that

doesn't continue to happen in the absence of the assembly and that when Northern Ireland gets its single equality act, we use the opportunity to seriously catch up."

The commission has drawn up proposed changes to the DDA which go further than recent recommendations by the Disability Rights Commission to bring it in line with other anti-discrimination laws.

They include outlawing indirect discrimination – such as where an employer asks for qualifications or experience that might deter someone with a disability – and creating a single equalities tribunal.

## Welsh wellbeing

The National Osteoporosis Society has launched a strategy to help local health boards in Wales improve the standard of care they provide patients.

Welsh Health Minister Jane Hutt said there were currently "unacceptable variations" in services for osteoporosis, which currently cost Welsh health and social care services more than £84m a year.

The Osteoporosis and Fracture Prevention Strategy aims to establish a lead GP on the condition in every area and a local interest group to encourage different agencies to work together.

The charity hopes it will help local health boards meet their obligation to have a falls centre in every area by April 2005, under the National Service Framework for Older People.

But it warned that the plans could be hampered by the lack of extra funding to implement the framework.

## Equipment overhaul

Scottish equipment and adaptation services are to be overhauled because they have been a "source of irritation" for disabled people for too long.

A new Scottish Executive report\* calls for an audit of the organisation and delivery of advice and demonstration services across Scotland. It also says disabled and older people should be included in the development of priorities and policies. The deadline for responses is 26 September.

\* *Equipped for Inclusion*, [www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/social/efir-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/social/efir-00.asp)=20

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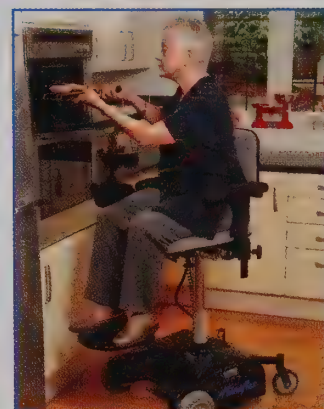
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# Scoring gold at Paralympics

The Great Britain team came home with 43 medals, finishing second place behind Germany at the first European Paralympic Athletics Championships.

The 34-strong team won 18 golds, 12 silvers and 15 bronze medals at the championships. Over 750 athletes from 35 countries took part in the event, held in Holland.

Tanni Grey-Thompson won three golds and one silver medal to top the impressive GB performances. She won gold in the T53 100m, 200m and 400m, but came second in the 800m.

Competing 16 months after the birth of her daughter, Grey-Thompson said: "I'm not back to my best yet, but it's good to be winning races again."

Karen Lewis, from Scotland, also raced well, winning gold in the T52 400m and silver in the 100m and 200m.

Danny Crates confirmed his growing reputation with a dominant performance in the 800m to win a gold medal.

Shot-putter Kim Minett, who recently competed in the National Open Dwarf Games, threw a personal best of 6.5m to take first place in the F40 shot putt and was awarded official world record status along with her gold medal.

Former London Marathon winners David Weir and David Holding won silver and bronze in the T54 200m Bronze. Weir picked up his second silver medal in the 400m.



Hope for British tennis: Britain's Kevin Plowman (pictured) partnered world number three Kai Schrammeyer, from Germany, to play two exhibition matches of wheelchair tennis against Britain's Matthew Faucher and world number two Robin Ammerlaan, from Holland, over the finals weekend of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. Both pairings won one match each.

# Britain takes bronze

Great Britain's men's wheelchair basketball team has qualified for next year's Paralympic Games after winning bronze in the European Championships.

The men's team reached the semi-finals of the championships in Sardinia but was stopped from making the final by hosts Italy, who beat them 56-47. Italy then went on to win the championships.

With a medal still in sight, the team managed to put their disappointment behind them and came from behind to beat France 74-64 in the third-place play-off. France was the only team to defeat Britain in the group stages.

Dave Titmuss, GB men's team senior coach, said he was optimistic about the Paralympics and pleased with the younger players, Terry Bywater (right), Matt Byrne and new captain Andy Blake.

"It was the first tournament he has captained and we were delighted with his captaincy and with his floor game," he said.

Although the team has technically qualified for the 2004 Paralympics, they now have to be officially selected by the British Paralympic Association.



GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

# New deaf sport organisation

A new organisation has been created to coordinate and promote deaf sport ahead of the 2005 Deaflympic Games.

UK Sport, the sports funding body, set up UK Deaf Sport to replace the British Deaf Sports Council (BDSC) as the leading UK deaf sporting organisation.

The move follows 18 months of talks over the future of deaf sport, after Great Britain's poor medal haul at the 2001

Deaflympics and the BDSC's failure to secure funding for the 2003 European Deaf Football Championships.

UK Sport was concerned with a general loss of confidence in the BDSC and felt the BDSC was at odds with its aims to make deaf sport more inclusive.

Chairman of UK Deaf Sport, Craig Cowley, said: "For too long, deaf athletes have been

crying out for professional back up and skilled coaching to help raise their performance to a new level."

The English Federation of Disability Sport and the British Deaf Association (BDA) have welcomed the new organisation.

BDA said that for too long deaf sport in the UK has been in the "doldrums" and hoped it would now be able to "reach its full potential".

## Cricket Awards seek top UK players

The England blind cricket captain is supporting the Disabled Cricketer of the Year Awards, run by *Cricket World* magazine in conjunction with *DN*.

The awards are a new national scheme set up to raise the profile of disabled cricket across the UK and are open to cricketers of all ages with both physical and learning disabilities.

Adam Benjamin, England blind cricket captain (lower row, centre), thinks the



competition will get more people involved in disabled cricket. "Anything that profiles blind cricket has got to be good."

The awards will be divided into three categories, covering disabled, blind and deaf cricket. For each category there will be bowling, batting, fielding and special achievement awards.

Winners will receive trophies and equipment.

Entry forms can be ordered by phoning 01476 561944 or downloaded from the web at [www.cricketworld.com/disabled/](http://www.cricketworld.com/disabled/)

Entries should be received by 30 September.



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# World view

The first international congress of young disabled people was a landmark for campaigners who have been denied a voice. Children's Express reports back from Wales.

One hundred young disabled people from around the world marked the European Year of Disabled People by attending a week-long congress at Swansea University in Wales from 30 June to 5 July.

The event, Rights into Action 2003, was the first international congress of young disabled people. It was led by the young people themselves and was designed to let them have their voices heard.

With the help of funding from the Welsh Assembly and the British Council, they attended workshops and passionately discussed the issues that affect their lives.

The delegates, aged 14 to 24, were recruited through voluntary organisations across the globe, including Africa and South-East Asia. Debate centred on the social model of disability, with access to education and employment at the centre of their concerns, along with other people's attitudes and prejudices.

The congress was organised by Children in Wales, with Bob

Mattingly as key organiser.

He said: "I've been working on this for about eight months, and organising the logistics wasn't easy. It's not a package holiday. We had 100 kids, each with their own very particular needs. We really had to fight to get some of them visas, but we succeeded in all but one case."

One delegate who faced difficulties in attending was Sharif Ullahlatifi, 24, from Afghanistan. He says: "We waited more than two months, but eventually the visa was agreed two days before congress. I had to travel on a bus on a very rough road for 10 hours and spend a day in Pakistan filling in forms and getting tickets. Then I flew from Islamabad to London. I'm so glad I made it, but I don't know what going home will be like."

European delegates at the congress were shocked to hear of the circumstances that young disabled people experience in developing countries.

They met Jabu Lal Chaudhary, 16, from Nepal. Jabu has worked as a manual labourer since he was 14,



Global campaigners: reporter Asa Marshal (far left) helps draw up the manifesto

despite having a severe impairment to both his feet.

At the congress, he devoted much of his time to art. "I love drawing and painting. In Nepal, all my time is taken up with school and work. I walk two hours to school, and when I finish my lessons, I work as a stone-breaker for five hours. I break stones into pebbles for construction – building roads and walls. I don't do paintings."

The contrast in people's lives was illuminated by the fact that Jabu walks only with the aid of a pair of flip-flops that he personally adapted and a piece of rough cane as a walking stick.

The young people, whose disabilities ranged from physical impairments to learning difficulties, talked freely in workshops and expressed themselves through art. In the evening, when they had finished with politics, delegates disco-danced into the early hours.

After a week of workshops, debates and refining ideas, the young people drew up a manifesto of demands to present to influential politicians and decision-makers at a plenary event.

A panel of elected participants presented their ideas, and then discussed the manifesto with the politicians in small groups.

Glenys Kinnock, MEP for Wales, said: "This congress is so important – young disabled people are getting doors quite literally shut in their faces."

"The European Union is a major donor of aid to these countries, so I will make sure that when we put programmes in place, we will pressurise for commitments and provision for disability rights in every programme."

An important part of the manifesto was the desire to build and maintain an international

network of young disabled people who will campaign and plan future congresses.

After an conversation with delegates, Jane Royall, from the European Commission, made a spontaneous commitment to investigate funding. She said: "I am committed to seeing this international network go stronger."

The Disability Rights Commission's Commissioner for Wales, Kevin Fitzpatrick, responsible for the initial idea of the event, says: "Some people that have come here do not even have a conception of what it is to have a civil right, to have human rights, or to be able to secure those rights for themselves. We believe that this week will have changed that for a number of young people, and they can take that message home with them and start making a change in their home countries."

*We would like to thank the signers and translators that helped us with our interviews, in particular Jiyam Babu Shrestha from Nepal. We would also like to thank Barrow Cadbury for the funding that made it possible for us to attend Congress and report on it.*



Benoit Le Phattan  
20, France

"Everyone has come together to see what is different and what is the same. Europeans are talking about getting better wheelchairs and access, while people from Afghanistan and Turkey haven't got half of what we have."

Samuel Wong Thin Choy  
23, Malaysia

"This congress has made us realise that we can ask our governments for more. It has opened our eyes. Young disabled people need to have one voice across the world so that they will be heard."



Fabia Gabadise  
24, South Africa

"I learned that my country isn't really that bad because I was at least allowed to go to school – many people struggle to get an education when they are disabled. We need to fight for those people, and always fight to improve our own countries."



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# Introduction of **INDEPENDENCE™ iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair Revolutionizes Category With New Technology



**Independence Technology**, a Johnson & Johnson company, has announced the availability of the **INDEPENDENCE™ iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair. The **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair operates similarly to a conventional manual wheelchair, but uses proprietary technology to supplement user input power. To the user, the **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair feels like a much lighter chair moving over a flat, smooth surface regardless of the terrain. Sensors and microprocessors provide motorized assistance, requiring much less effort from the user than required in a traditional manual wheelchair.

To move with the **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair, the user simply pushes the handrims as if propelling a standard manual wheelchair. The patented technology of the **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair monitors both the user's input and the resulting motion, determining the appropriate level of additive power to provide a similar feel even when ascending or descending ramps or crossing resistive terrain such as grass or soft carpet. To the casual observer, there is little perceived difference when viewing the contemporarily designed **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair, compared to a regular manual wheelchair. To the **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist

Wheelchair user, however, there is a remarkable difference.

## Bodies Benefit from Reducing Stress and Strain of "Manual Wheelchair Syndrome"

The **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair was developed to assist people with varying forms of mobility disorders ranging from arthritis, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy, paraplegia and tetraplegia, and may relieve and/or reduce the risk of "manual wheelchair syndrome," - repetitive stress injuries, such as rotator cuff and carpal tunnel syndrome, which are common problems among manual wheelchair users. The **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair also provides an option for wheelchair users looking to sensibly protect and preserve upper body strength and function for years to come.

## Innovative, Lightweight Technology

The **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair maintains most of the features of a manual wheelchair while combining advantages currently only available in larger, heavier power wheelchairs. The contemporary design of the **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair incorporates an unobtrusive, built-in, under-the-seat

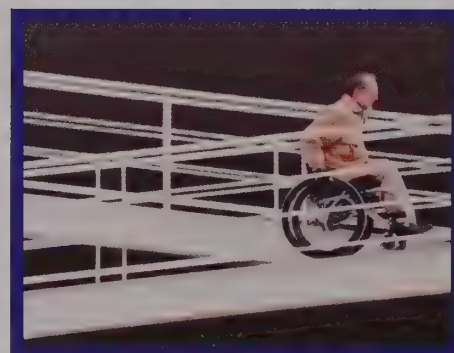
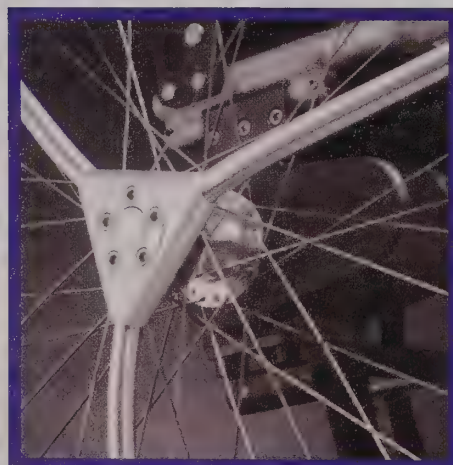
system that provides the user with discreet power assistance. At approximately 55 pounds, the **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair was designed for easy transport, with quick-release wheels, battery removal and fold-down seatback.

## Independence Technology: A Company with a Mission

The company mission is to develop products and technology applications that help people with disabilities live their lives with greater freedom. With this product, Johnson & Johnson extends its tradition of innovative health care service to a community of nearly six million people worldwide who use wheelchairs.

In November, 2002, Independence Technology also received a unanimous recommendation for FDA approval from an expert independent advisory panel assembled by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to evaluate data for the company's **INDEPENDENCE™ iBOT™** Mobility System. The **iBOT™** Mobility

System operates on rechargeable battery power and uses a complex system of sensors, gyroscopes and electronics to simulate balance, enabling users to climb and descend stairs, navigate variable terrain, ascend kerbs and elevate, for extended periods, to a "standing" position. The company hopes to introduce the **iBOT™** Mobility System this year.



For additional information about the **iGLIDE™** Manual Assist Wheelchair, the **iBOT™** Mobility System and Independence Technology visit:

[www.independencenow.com/uk](http://www.independencenow.com/uk)

or [www.iglidenow.com/uk](http://www.iglidenow.com/uk)

Alternatively freephone 08000 327 326.



# Man of action

It's been ten years since the Disabled People's Direct Action Network first hit the streets to demand equal rights. Nuala Calvi talks to Alan Holdsworth about a decade of campaigning

In 1990, Alan Holdsworth received a call from a woman who worked with young disabled people, asking him if he could "do anything about the Telethon".

Twenty-seven hours of Chris Tarrant and others jumping in buckets of jelly for disabled people alongside pictures of naked men showing off their prosthetic limbs to a soundtrack of violins had, it seemed, upset quite a lot of people.

Having gone to court two years earlier for bringing the centre of Chesterfield to a grinding halt in protest over the lack of disabled parking spaces, Holdsworth, she knew, was reckless enough to take on the challenge.

"We started organising in February. By spring, we had over 1,000 disabled people outside the LWT studios. Two

Ten years and more than 200 "actions" later, DAN remains a unique phenomenon within the world of disability campaigning, not least because its structure – a loose network of disabled people across Britain, with no hierarchy, no bank account, no address, no telephone number and thus no chance of being sued or shut down – is as far away from the well-oiled machinery of the RNIB or RNID as you can get.

Holdsworth, one of the founding fathers of DAN and the only "Danner" to have been on every national action since it started, was drawn to non-violent direct action by a strong conviction that disabled people had to be as uncompromising as other civil rights campaigners.

"If you think disability is on the same planet at all as gender or race issues and you

Holdsworth over the next few years. The message of the campaign was simple: "It's wrong, put it right."

But while he sees the ultimate purpose of direct action as "getting to the table", Holdsworth is not willing to do so unless that table is his – or DAN's. Anyway, talking to officials about what he calls the "geeky stuff" is not his style.

Holdsworth's strength lies instead in his fearlessness, be it in sneaking red paint into Downing Street to throw at police officers to protest benefit cuts, crawling on hands and knees into the Houses of Parliament to campaign on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), or heckling a meeting of Tories in a barn in Dorset to lose MP Rob Hayward a by-election. He is also a composer and singer of "punk poetry", as his alter ego, musician Johnny Crescendo.

Despite the seriousness with which Holdsworth regards what DAN does, one of the most important things to him has always been the outrageous amount of fun had on protests.

"One demo in London, I remember, was the only time the whole demo got arrested. It was so funny, though. We hit Downing Street on the first day and the police didn't like that, so they were on our case.

"The second day, we went to the Mall to 'take our message to the Queen'. We did a 'weave' – wheeling in and out of the traffic to effectively block it. The whole Mall got blocked up and the police lost their rag and had no hesitation in arresting everyone. They were even arresting mothers and babies on the pavement who had nothing to do with us. Thirty-six people went to Charing Cross nick!"

Since those days, DAN – and Holdsworth – has had to do slightly more of the "geeky" stuff. A new campaign in 1999, Free Our People, led to Holdsworth joining his local Birmingham council as a disability advisor, to work on helping disabled people live independently in the community.

Nevertheless, Holdsworth remains adamant that DAN should not sit round the table with non-disabled 'experts' from charities purporting to speak for disabled people. He sees lobbyists as having "sold out" disabled people in getting

**'Nelson Mandela, the suffragettes, the trade unions – eventually, they chose direct action. Otherwise, the people oppressing you go on unchallenged'**

people managed to sneak into the studios and start screaming.

"It went around the world. The disabled people's movement in Zimbabwe, the US, Europe, all contacted us giving us support against the Telethon. The second year, we had 2,000 people. Their takings went from £30m to £12m. After that, they stopped it. It was a total culture shock to the media – they couldn't believe we were attacking them."

The event is still regarded as one of the Direct Action Network's (DAN) biggest achievements, largely because it served to "move disability off the health pages" and into the rights agenda.

But it also precipitated a meeting of like-minded people at a Norfolk hotel, out of which the phenomenon that is DAN was born.



Dan dare: protesting against the Disability Discrimination Act



Statebound: after a decade with DAN, Holdsworth's heading overseas

the DDA through by a series of backroom deals with ministers.

As Holdsworth prepares to move to Philadelphia with his American wife, he sees a future for DAN in pushing for the Rights and Freedoms bill, drawn up by British Council of Disabled People and others as an alternative to the DDA.

"The DDA means nothing to someone lying in an institution in their own shit and piss pressing a button. In an institution, you don't have a right over who feeds you, undresses you, what food you eat, when you eat, whether you can go out. There's no appeal, no tribunal – it's

a lifetime sentence."

Not surprisingly, Holdsworth will be taking his enthusiasm for direct action across the pond, where he will be involved with DAN's sister organisation, Adapt.

"There will always be a role for direct action. DAN is unified in keeping it honest, keeping it grassroots and on the extreme edge of discrimination, not leaving those most seriously discriminated against behind.

"If you were lying in that institution bed, you wouldn't want some lobbyist geek having tea with a minister. You'd want DAN out there fighting for you."

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ILLUSTRATIONS: CLARE CURTIS

# Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the editor  
Mary Wilkinson, Disability Now,  
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minicom: 020 7619 7332,  
fax: 020 7619 7331,  
e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



## Disability jokes on prime time tv

What else can you expect from people whose ignorance about everything shows in their every word and thought? I have given up writing to correct their lack of common knowledge.

But keep writing. It is the only way to give any hope that they might learn. It is the only way black people have brought these insults to our general knowledge.

Eunice Wilson  
London SW6

It is certainly no joke when only one side of an argument is put forward, which seems to be the case in the last two issues of *DN* (June and July).

Not all disabled people are so sensitive to what are, after all, a mere handful of questionable attempts at

humour by the likes of Jonathan Ross.

Sure, those disabled people who were offended have a right to be heard, but so do I.

I and others feel strongly that in the overall scheme of things the argument is way over the top and in danger of portraying disabled people as a bunch of sadoes, who have nothing better to do than sit in front of the telly waiting for something to moan about.

I refuse to be so categorised.

Publications which do much very positive work on important issues must remain balanced when it comes to issues of taste and decency, which are not the preserve of disabled people or those seeking to represent the views of this not unintelligent

section of society.

When a handful of incidents can be blown up out of all proportion, how can the community at large be serious about the social integration of disabled people?

Mike Knoth  
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Regarding your article about trying to combat disability jokes on tv, this is the first stage of acceptance by recognition.

Gays had the same problem. Now the jokes have diminished to a healthy level and they are referred to as gay and not queer, poof, bender or other anomalies. So, in time, it will be fashionable to use a wheelchair.

Martin Lightfoot  
Peterborough, Cambs.

### Tate a Tate boat

I was concerned to see Anne Davies apparently marooned in her wheelchair in the aisle of the new Tate a Tate river boat ser-

vice (*DN* July). That's not access.

Rob Bracewell  
Lancaster City Council  
*There are four wheelchair spaces in the boat - Editor*

### Campaign call

I am concerned about the fashion for small lettering on public signs, even in hospitals, where it is vital to display clear directions. This makes life hard for people with visual disabilities, such as cataracts or short-sight. Often these places have large boards but with very tiny writing, in a pale colour.

We should campaign for larger signs in places like hospitals and railway stations.

Ann Wills  
Ruislip, Middx

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**BAIDER**

## The ultimate human right

Your articles on euthanasia (*DN* April and May) have been interesting but depressingly one-dimensional.

This is a controversial subject, but let's be clear: there is a case for euthanasia ("a gentle, easy death") or, more precisely, voluntary euthanasia.

Your second headline was "Life is life", but a different perspective was provided by Reginald Crew before he was helped to die in Switzerland: "I'd never say I was tired of life, but I'm tired of the life I'm in".

Alas, the word "euthanasia" has emotive associations and tends to attract fundamentalist responses. One of these is the idea that choosing to die creates an impression in the public mind that disability is something so awful as to call into question the worth of disabled people, even the validity of their existence. I think this is nonsense.

The issue, leaving aside the unfortunate case of Bob and Jenny Stokes, narrows down to a few very serious, progressive conditions, which cause horrendous and worsening suffering. The question, then, is whether an individual in such circumstances may choose a shortened life.

I think that such a preference is a personal matter, depending on the exact circumstances, and should not be constrained by the ideology of the disability "movement". Some may opt for palliative care, but I cannot see that there is anything in choosing an early death to connote that *everyone* with a disability would be better off dead; nothing to demote those with serious but stable disabilities. Are we not faced here with the ultimate human right?

Derek Kinrade  
London SE15

have done wrong in portraying Rob as he appears in daily life. Isn't it the wish of disabled people to be accepted for who and what they are by society?

### Own goal

West Ham United Football Club put their foot in it when they sent out a letter to season ticket holders, asking them not to stand at games next season. One reached Paul Reynolds, a disabled season ticket holder who holds a space in a section occupied only by wheelchair users. He made his feelings known on the unofficial West Ham website KUMB.COM.

Surely you need to get your fans behind you after last season's performances, rather than alienate them, Hammers?

## Teen spirit



James Finch writes about internet relationships

My name is James. I go to Mere Oaks School, Wigan. I am 14 and I have cerebral palsy.

My class has been working on a film making project with a professional film company. We sent in a story idea to First Light Film and won the opportunity to have our ideas made into a film.

It is about Anna who has cerebral palsy. She makes a chance internet acquaintance which turns into a pen pal type of relationship, which soon develops into something more involved. This leads to complications and Anna is forced to make a difficult decision about herself and her disability. She has to decide whether to tell her pen pal, Brian, that she has a disability. She decides not to. The outcome is unexpected and there's a twist in the tale.

The film is about honesty, disability and prejudice.

Although it is fictional, it relates to a similar experience I had on the internet about the same time.

I had an internet pen friend in America - a girl. We exchanged a few letters and became quite friendly. But soon I faced the same dilemma as Anna - should I tell my friend I am disabled? I didn't want to make the same mistake as Anna so I did tell my pen pal that I had cerebral palsy. She never e-mailed me again!

The film is called *The Net*. Hopefully it will be released as a teacher resource pack later in the year under the Citizenship curriculum.

It was my involvement in helping to write the story for the film that helped me reach what I think was the correct decision about my pen pal. I have nothing to hide and nothing to feel ashamed about. If she couldn't accept me as I am then that's her problem, not mine. She doesn't know what a good catch she has let slip!



# Picture perfect

DN's *Freedom in Focus* competition received a record number of entries this year. Lucy Glynn reports from the awards ceremony at swanky Brown's restaurant in Covent Garden

**S**tudents from a North Wales school won four top prizes in this year's Freedom in Focus competition.

Thomas Mathias, from Ysgol Belmont School in Buckley, Flintshire, won the under 18 modern life category for his picture of his friend David pouring from a bottle into a glass.

"I just thought of it and I told Dave (his teacher). I'm pleased, surprised," he said.

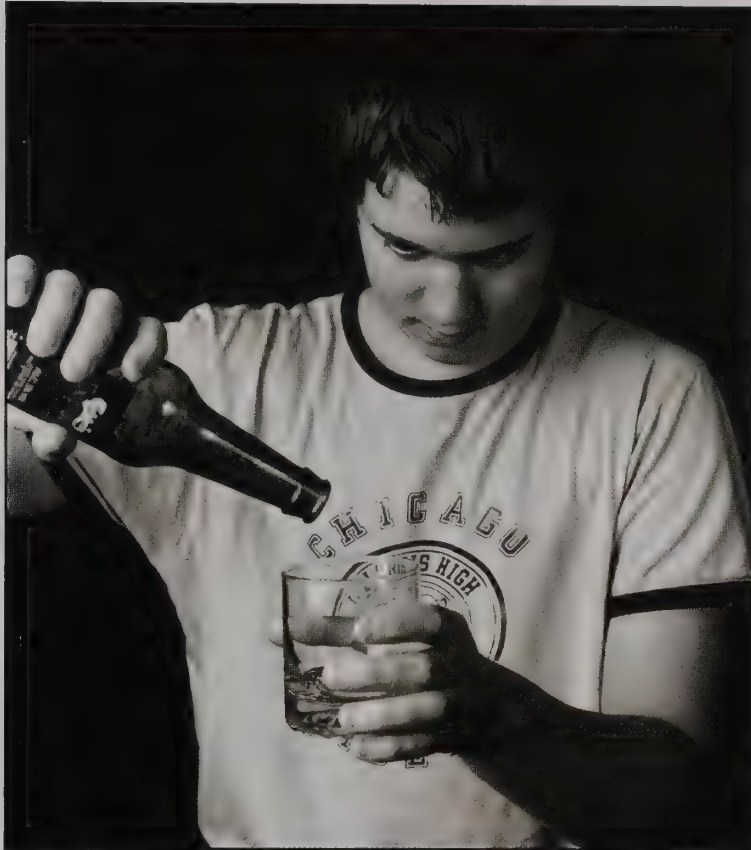
Alun Jones, who also goes to Ysgol Belmont School, was runner-up in the same category for his picture of his best friend, Jonathan. He said: "I thought I wasn't going to get anything for it."

The school does well because final year students go to a college photography class to prepare them for going to college. The students also printed the photographs themselves.

The winners were announced at a reception in London by actress and disability rights campaigner Julie Fernandez.

There was a record 289 entries, with 1043 photographs, in the competition organised by DN and Leonard Cheshire and sponsored by Barclays.

Elliot Grant, who won the under 18 nature section, is now having extra photography



Winner, under 18 modern life: *A Quick Tipple* by Thomas Mathias

lessons. "I would like to take up photography when I leave school," he said.

Ann McMeekin was "absolutely delighted" to win best modern life picture in the over 18 section and would also like to become a professional photographer.

She takes her camera everywhere and plans to spend her prize money on a photography course. Her

winning photograph was one of more than 200 she has taken of the London Underground.

"I moved to London about a year and a half ago. I came from Scotland and was fascinated by the tube, with all the different people getting on and off."

David Stephenson, who lives in the Lake District, won the over 18's nature prize for his picture of Bassenthwaite Lake.



Winner, over 18 modern life: *Rush Hour* by Ann McMeekin



Winner, over 18 nature: *Early Mist - Bass Lake* by David Stephenson



Winner, under 18 nature: *Stack of Wood and Dust* by Elliot Grant

"I had been to two or three other lakes that morning. The mist only happens very early in the morning."

An exhibition of the winning photographs and best entries takes place at Metropolitan Cathedral of

Christ the King, Liverpool, from 2-25 September; Cotton's Atrium, London Bridge, 28 September-4 October; and the Bridlesmith Gate Gallery, Nottingham, 14-25 October. *Freedom in Focus 2004* will be launched later this year.

## Keeping it focussed: the winners



### Modern life

#### Under 18:

**Winner:** Thomas Mathias, Ysgol Belmont School, Buckley, Flintshire (*bottom, in right of photo*)

**Runner-up:** Alun Jones, Ysgol Belmont School

**Highly commended:** Jordan Wright, Somerset

#### 18 and over:

**Winner:** Ann McMeekin, London (*far left, with Julie Fernandez*)

**Runner-up:** Janet Cook, Shipley, West Yorkshire

**Highly commended:** Richard Cooke, Chichester

### Nature

#### Under 18:

**Winner:** Elliot Grant, Cornhill, Banffshire (*bottom in left of photo*)

**Runner-up:** Caoimhe McGraw, Ysgol Belmont School, Buckley, Flintshire

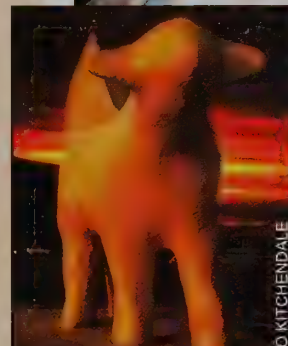
**Highly commended:** Matthew Kidd, Ysgol Belmont School

#### 18 and over:

**Winner:** David Stephenson, Cockermouth, Cumbria (*top right, receiving his prize*)

**Runner-up:** Julie Pigula, Bolton

**Highly commended:** Brian Adam, Grimsby







The Quovis can be entered and driven without leaving your wheelchair. Douglas (below) tries it out.

With the new Vexel Quovis, entering your vehicle is hassle free. *DN* motoring correspondent Douglas Campbell takes it for a test drive to see what it has to offer disabled drivers

**T**he Vexel Quovis – the first new road vehicle designed specifically for disabled people in nearly 30 years – has just hit the UK market.

Not since the last “invalid” tricycle was launched in the 1970s has there been anything like the Quovis. While many vehicles have been adapted for disabled people, nothing was designed for them from the start.

The Quovis, a single seater, is very small and designed to be driven from a wheelchair. The power comes from a 505cc diesel engine that drives a fully automatic transmission. Disc

brakes all round, electrically power-assisted steering and independent suspension all provide for a smooth ride.

For such a small car, I was surprised to find it contained features many cars enjoy: heater, electric front windows, adjustable steering column, cassette player, rear parking sensors, electric driving mirrors, alloy wheels, locking filler cap and two-tone paint finish.

While the price of £13,495 seems high – especially when considering the Quovis is VAT



free – it includes many features that disabled drivers might see as extras. These include a powered tailgate and access ramp (both operated by remote control), access winch and tie-down system to load and secure the wheelchair, hand-operated accelerators on both sides of the steering wheel and an operated push brake lever

At just 2.4 metres long and 1.8 metres tall, this really is a compact car. It is a quadricycle and only requires a driving licence for that class of vehicle.

I visited Jubilee Automotive for a test drive. Jubilee is one of the two distributors in the UK for this Spanish-built vehicle. My first impressions were good. The Quovis looks smart and very modern. Getting in was easy. Jubilee's Mike Holland quickly explained the controls and off we went. The car I drove was fitted with the optional extra tip-up seat for an instructor and Mike squeezed in behind me.

The electronic accelerators on each side of the steering wheel were wonderfully light to use. When you turn the wheel, the accelerators move round with it, which took some getting used to. The brake is a simple push lever that was effective in use.

Starting the engine came as a shock. The noise from this tiny diesel is amazing. I found that it drowned out the clicking of the indicators and most other noise. I would certainly have had to turn up the radio very loud to hear it over the engine. Mind you, it

was probably no worse than the noise I “enjoyed” from the invalid tricycle I drove until 1972.

Initially, I found the steering difficult to master. Once the car gets moving, it is light and very responsive. Full lock from left to right is only one half-turn of the wheel (ie 180°). At first, I kept turning far too sharply, but after trying out a few of Wednesbury's best roundabouts, I almost had the knack.

Over a drive of almost seven miles, I tested the Quovis over a wide range of roads. My fears that it would ground or lurch violently at road humps proved wrong when we tackled some pretty aggressive examples. Unlike a larger car, the Quovis has to take at least one set of wheels over speed cushions, but this was not a problem at the right speed.

The driving position is good, with excellent forward and sideways vision. The two side mirrors do an excellent job, but I would want to add a central mirror to look directly behind me. Wide pillars on each side of the windscreen seem to create a blind spot, but I feel sure that a regular driver would soon get used to these.

With a small engine like this, acceleration is not going to be exciting, but it did seem adequate. The manufacturers quote a top speed of 43mph, but I believe it will probably do a bit more than this on an open road.

The really good points are that it is easy to get in using a wheelchair and easy to drive. Being small, it only needs a small parking space and can be reversed up to a kerb for even easier loading.

The downside, apart from the engine noise, is that there is almost no space inside for luggage or shopping. Frankly, it would be difficult to fit in more than a couple of bags of shopping.

For short trips to work, shops, college or friends, this is an ideal vehicle for wheelchair users. Long journeys are possible, but it takes guts to drive this on a busy rural motorway. Given the choice between the accessible taxis and the freedom of the road with the Quovis, I would certainly choose the Quovis. I might, however, also buy some ear plugs!

Remember, too, that with specialist advice, the Quovis is well suited to further adaptations to the wheelchair tie-down system and the driving controls.

For further information, contact either of the main dealers: Jubilee Automotive Group, Wednesbury, West Midlands. Tel: 0121 502 2252.

UV Modular, Brighouse, West Yorkshire. Tel: 01484 400200.

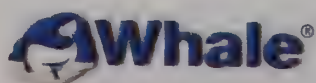
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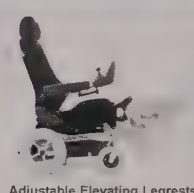
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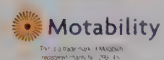
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# Kings of rock

Think you know everything about the Beatles and Elvis? If you haven't been to Liverpool, there's more to learn, says Dan Batten

**F**or Fab Four fanatics, or even casual fans, the Beatles Story in Liverpool has everything a day tripper could desire.

The first thing you'll see when entering the museum is a banjo played by John in his first band, the Quarrymen. Turn around and you'll see George's first guitar, and some facts on pre-Beatle life. We learn that during his time working in a Speke factory, a teenage Paul was bizarrely nicknamed Mantovani because of the length of his hair.

Next is a mock-up of the

Casbah Club in Liverpool, owned by original drummer Pete Best's mum and scene of some early shows. A trip down a seedy Hamburg street takes you to the German red light district where they lived in one room behind a sex cinema and played 12-hour sets in seedy bars. We also get to sit in a model of the Cavern club in Liverpool, where they played over 300 shows.

A recreation of the Abbey Road studio, where they recorded until 1969, features a tape recorder from the studios. When they arrived for their first

recording session in 1962, producer George Martin asked the boys if there was anything they didn't like about the set up. George Harrison's reply of "Well, I don't like your tie," has become part of Beatles legend.

After a year, two albums and a few singles, something happened: Beatlemania. The world went mad in 1963, sending George an estimated 30,000 birthday cards for his 21st birthday. The deafening screams that followed them everywhere, especially during shows, follows you through the



Roll up for the mystery tour: Elvisania on display at the *Fingerprints of Elvis* exhibit (left), while a recreation of Hamburg's red light district (top) and John's piano are on display at the Beatles story

exhibit and gives an idea of the fervour that surrounded them.

Tired of being unable to hear themselves play, they stopped touring in 1966 and retired to the studio, making some of their greatest records, including *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* – celebrated here with a giant recreation of the infamous front cover. There's also a yellow submarine to pass through, with real fish swimming past as the song plays. Trying not to sing along is futile.

Similarly fab, and just a few hundred yards away, is a new exhibition, *Fingerprints of Elvis*. While it may seem odd to have an exhibition on a man from Memphis in Liverpool, according to John Lennon, the Beatles wouldn't have existed without Elvis.

While not as detailed as the Beatles museum, you do get an audio guide describing individual items, and there are plenty of artefacts to keep you interested. My mum, a fan for almost fifty years, was in her element.

On show when you enter are some early rarities on the Sun label. Around the corner, you'll find a glass case with an autographed guitar that Elvis strummed those early tunes on. I could see mum yearning for some glass cutting implements, or maybe just a brick.

Turn another corner and you have a glass case full of the jump suits Elvis wore on stage in the late 60s. Early designs were relatively plain, but

became more ostentatious as time went by, with some suits tipping the scales at 20lbs plus.

Away from the stage, you'll see how Elvis got around, with a stunning Harley Davidson bike and a gold Mercedes car. I'm sure she wasn't supposed to do it, but mum couldn't resist a touch of the car!

We also saw a side of Elvis I didn't know about – his love of karate. Apparently the King was proficient, but not immune to accidents, as an x-ray of his hands following a martial arts mishap shows. As well as his bones, there's also a set of fingerprints taken by a police department. We aren't told why, though.

While both exhibitions are hugely entertaining, they both end on sad notes. The acrimonious break up of the Beatles dominated the last quarter, while news footage from the time of John's assassination in 1980 and a recreation of the white room featured in the *Imagine* video, rounds out the Beatles Story, while a mock up of Elvis' gravestone with a video of mourning fans following his death in 1977 ends *Fingerprints*.

Despite this, both shows guarantee a splendid time. You'll even find yourself saying "thank you very much" to the curators on your way out. *The Beatles Story*, tel: 0151 709 1963, [www.beatlesstory.com](http://www.beatlesstory.com) *Fingerprints of Elvis*, tel: 0151 709 1790, [www.fingerprintslofelvis.com](http://www.fingerprintslofelvis.com)

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# Get lost in the maze



Carol and Steve Buchnall took their sons, Harry and Jack, to Kielder to check out the wildlife, castle and a brand new maze

**B**eing keen caravanners, we decided to tug our mobile home up to Kielder Water to enjoy some outdoor recreation. Tucked away at the top of Northumberland, close to the Scottish Border, Kielder Water is the largest man-made lake in Europe and part of an area blessed with natural beauty. Kielder Forest, one of Britain's biggest nature resorts, is home to red squirrels, deer and rare birds.

Getting there was straightforward enough – being approximately 30 miles north west of Hexham, we arrived mid afternoon. The site we chose to stay at was the Caravan Club site near to Leaplish waterpark and visitor centre. While not the best we have visited, it was adequate for our needs and the views of the lake and surrounding hills were breathtaking.

When it comes to finding somewhere to stay, there are literally hundreds of places to choose from. The best source of information is the Internet: try [www.kielder.org](http://www.kielder.org), which has a mountain of information available as well as useful links to other web-sites.

The purpose of our visit was to try out the recently completed maze situated at Kielder Castle visitor centre, at the north end of the lake. Minotaur, as it is called, opened to the public this June and professes to be fully accessible. It was constructed using wire baskets, filled with local whinstone. It stands 2m tall.

The drive from Leaplish to Kielder Castle is only about 5 miles. Our first port of call was Kielder Castle Tourist Information, where we were

disappointed to find that they had no information on the new maze, although they are expecting leaflets in the near future.

We made our way along the Dukes Trail, a pleasant circular route about three quarters of a mile, past a pond, arboretum and a children's play area, eventually making it to the maze. The trail presented few problems, although the footpath leading to the arboretum was more rugged – most wheelchair users will need assistance to negotiate this section.

and stairs, and the materials used were thought provoking. But it is relatively small and took us less than fifteen minutes to get to the centre and find our way out again.

However, our two children, Harry, aged 5, who was born with cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user, and Jack, aged 7, both love mazes and really enjoyed it. In our opinion, however, Minotaur should be viewed as an addition to the tourist facilities already provided at Kielder Water, rather than an attraction in its own right.

**'Minotaur contains some interesting special features, such as confession seats and stairs, and the materials used were thought provoking'**

The maze is accessed off the main footpath, making it accessible to all. The corridors within the maze are wide enough to accept wheelchairs and the surface throughout is level and firm. Minotaur contains some interesting special features, such as confession seats

It is obvious that a great deal of thought has been given to the needs of disabled visitors – ranging from the specially-adapted toilet facilities to the well-designed trails and footpaths. We realise that ultimately this is a natural and often hostile environment and



A-maze-ing: Minotaur was a big hit with Harry and James (above and below), while Carol and Steve enjoyed some of the natural views of Kielder



to have made so much of it accessible to all is an achievement in its own right.

One last point: anyone planning to visit Kielder Water during the summer months should be aware that midges are a real problem, particularly in the evening. They are unusually ferocious and will spoil your visit if you don't come prepared with the right clothing and insect repellent.

*The Kielder Partnership,*  
tel: 01434 220643,  
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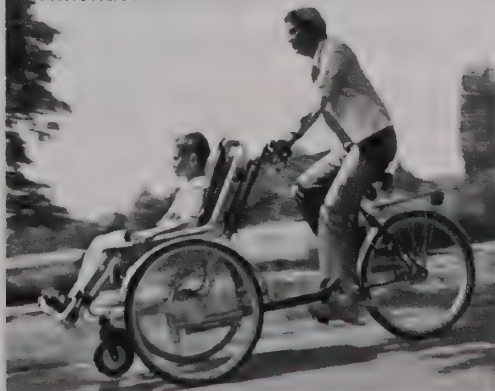
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# Seven day schedule

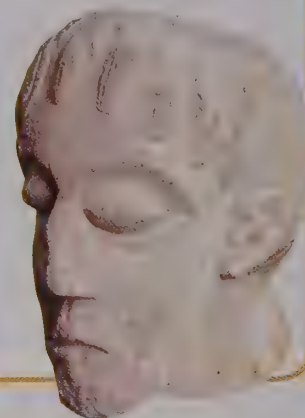
Looking for a good day out in the UK?  
Dan Batten has a week's worth of outings

## SUNDAY

**A**nd so for the last day of the week, why not go out with a bang with a trip to the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey, Essex? The exhibitions contain a short film, displays on the history of explosives and their making, a display of different weapons and a history of phrases and sayings in use today that stem from gunpowder production and military use. There is also an exhibition of the part women played in WWI and a variety of millworker costumes to try on. Tel: 01992 707370, website: [www.royalgunpowdermills.com](http://www.royalgunpowdermills.com)

## SATURDAY

**T**he weekend is here – a trip to the Gloucester City Museum and Art Gallery could be just what you need. It has exhibits showing the early life of the city – including Roman remains, reconstructed dinosaurs and a bronze mirror dating from around AD 50. It also has furniture, decorative arts and paintings as well as activities and exhibitions throughout the year. Tel: 01452 396131.



## MONDAY

**S**tart the week at the National Motorboat Museum in Basildon, Essex. Devoted entirely to the evolution of motorboat racing, it features boats dating back to 1873, as well as current start-of-the-art vessels, racing hydroplanes, powerboats and leisure boats. There's also a selection of trophies and a reference library that you can visit if you book in advance. Admission is free, which is sure to float everybody's boat. Tel: 01268 550077.



## TUESDAY

**N**ext, we find ourselves underground in the hell-fire caves in West Wycombe, Bucks. Developed in the 18th century by Sir Francis Dashwood, founder of the notoriously debauched Hellfire Club, the caves feature over half a mile of winding passages and chambers, as well as the inner temple, which is reached by crossing the river Styx. Tel: 01494 533739, [www.hellfirecaves.co.uk](http://www.hellfirecaves.co.uk)

## WEDNESDAY

**M**idweek, why not go to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham? Formerly a jewellery factory named Smith & Pepper that closed in 1914, the building was left undisturbed until re-opening as a museum in the late 1980s. A team can guide you through the museum, where jewellers demonstrate their skills. You can also catch up on the history of the jewellery quarter in the visitor centre. Tel: 01215 543598.

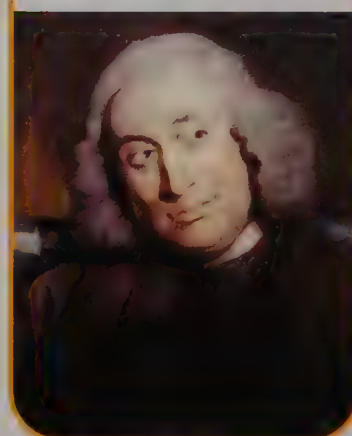


## FRIDAY

**A**fter Tuesday's trip into lawlessness, it's time to wander back onto the straight and narrow into Nottingham's Galleries of Justice. This museum – located in and around an old courthouse, county gaol and an early 20th century police station – will teach you everything you wanted to know about justice in England throughout the ages, all brought to life by a cast of actors playing good guys and bad. The Galleries also give visitors the chance to experience a mock trial in an authentic Victorian courtroom under the watchful eye of a "warden" and crack a case using forensic evidence. During school holidays, there's a children's activity centre, and there's also a temporary exhibition space and a civil law gallery to enjoy. Tel: 01159 520555, [www.galleriesofjustice.org.uk](http://www.galleriesofjustice.org.uk)

## THURSDAY

**S**till with history, we find ourselves in Lichfield, Staffordshire, at the birthplace, now a museum, of that famous dictionary compiler Samuel Johnson. Johnson lived here until he was 27, and the museum details his life and achievements. His famous creation, the dictionary, can be explored through the modern medium of CD-ROM, as can two libraries of Johnsonian and 18th century literature. Tel: 01543 264972, [www.lichfield.gov.uk/sjmuseum/](http://www.lichfield.gov.uk/sjmuseum/)



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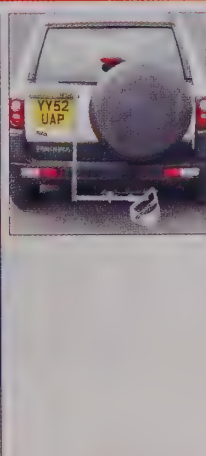


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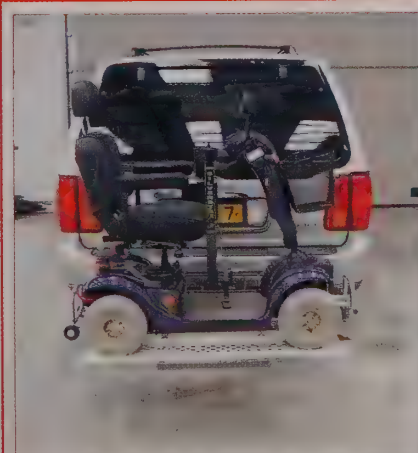


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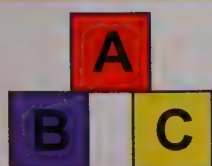
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# Stamp and deliver

If you can handle the early starts and the British weather, then working for the Royal Mail offers a rewarding – and surprisingly sociable – career, writes postman Jonathan Fallon

I get up every morning at about 5am, when my vibrating alarm clock goes off in my pillow. I don't have any problems getting up so early and I'm never late for work – you get used to the early starts.

When I arrive at the delivery office in South Norwood, my first job is to sort the letters ready for the round.

I start by sorting out the letters for the van driver to deliver. This is the mail that customers want delivered before a certain time in the morning. The driver also takes several "drop bags" of mail that I have prepared, which he leaves in boxes attached to postboxes around my "walk", or route. I then pick these up during the walk, because there are too many letters for me to take in one bag. Royal Mail regulations mean we are only allowed to carry a maximum of 16 kg.

My walk is Dagnell Park. I usually start at about 7am and when I've finished my first bag, I go to the box to pick up my second drop bag.

I usually return to the sorting office around 9am, and after a half-hour break and some breakfast, I start



preparing for my second walk. This time, most of the mail is second class, and I usually finish sometime around midday.

I work six days a week, Monday to Saturday, although there is only one delivery on a Saturday, so the hours are shorter.

Being deaf isn't really a problem when I'm out on my walk. Some people will be waiting for their mail and will ask if I have a letter for them. All I do is show them a card with my manager's name and number on it. Because I've been delivering mail on this walk for nearly a year, a lot of people on the round know my face and

know that I'm deaf.

Being a postman is interesting work and it helps my confidence because I am meeting people all the time and I really enjoy doing that. I also like working outside.

When I go to my deaf club, I explain to my friends what I do. A lot of them know now that being a postman is an interesting job.

I think doing a job where you sit at a desk all day would not suit me at all, because I would be worried about just sitting there with no interpreter all day.

In this job, you don't need an interpreter very often. When there are short meetings it isn't



Sorted: Jonathan on his round, and (left) in the office

really necessary, but with longer meetings, Royal Mail arranges for someone to be there who can interpret for me.

It would be useful if there were more interpreters but it costs money, and you can't have one all the time. Royal Mail are trying to sponsor staff to train as interpreters and doing it that way, which I think is really good.

My colleagues are friendly, but it can be difficult for me to communicate with them. There are two or three people at work who are really helpful.

The only adjustment I have needed to help me at work is a mirror which they fixed onto

the wall outside the sorting office door. When you come out through the door, it is right on a corner and the drive outside is quite narrow and there are often lots of vans driving up and down, so now I can look at the mirror and see if any vans are coming around the corner.

There are other deaf people working for Royal Mail. I know of two drivers, and the chairman of my deaf club is a postman in Bow, East London.

I started off by working part-time, just on a Saturday. I did that for about eight weeks and it went really well. My manager, Cliff Harris, liked me and gave me an interview for a full-time job. He said he liked me because I was always smiling at work.

At the interview, I had to lip-read and when I couldn't understand them or they couldn't understand me, we wrote things down. Sometimes it was difficult, but it didn't worry me.

I've been a postman now for about a year. Before that I was a road sweeper for ten years but I wanted a change and I saw the part-time job advertised in the Jobcentre. This is much better than being a road sweeper because I am using my brain now and I enjoy meeting people.

I attended a school for deaf children in Reading and then I went to the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation training college in Leatherhead. After that, I worked as a carpenter in a factory. I enjoyed working there, but when the factory closed down, I became a road sweeper.

I think I will stay in this job because I really enjoy it and I feel that my confidence is improving all the time.

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## Film



## Respiro



**E**manuele Crialese's film, shot on the Sicilian island of Lampedusa, shows the tough side of Mediterranean life in a small fishing community, where everything revolves around the boats and the packing plant.

But Grazia (Valeria Golino, right), a young mother, is starting to rebel against the grinding monotony of life in the restrictive environment.

A series of impulsive actions, such as going skinny-dipping with the children,

cause ripples in the community, and soon there are suggestions that she might have to be hospitalised on the mainland.

Her husband Petro (Vincenzo Amato) supports her, though he is unnerved by some of her behaviour. But as the possibility of her being sent away increases, it is her 13-year-old son Pasquale (Francesco Casisa) who is most upset at the idea.

When, in a moment of anger, Grazia releases the stray dogs from the village pound, her fate is sealed. Pasquale helps her to run away, but, on a small island, this is not a realistic solution.

I didn't know what to make of all this. Is this a story about incipient mental illness? Or

about a small community medicalising and destroying someone who simply wants a little more breathing space?

The film's strength is its depiction of everyday life in this remote fishing community: the scenes of work on the boats and in the fish market have a gritty authenticity, and the locations are undeniably stunning.

For some viewers, that will be enough. But ultimately, I found the film atmospheric but undisciplined.

The film's ending is baffling. I couldn't work out whether Grazia dies at the end or not. And to be honest, by that point I didn't really care.

**Allan Sutherland**



## TV



**H**ave you heard of partial trisomy 9P? Neither had I. This rare genetic condition was featured in C4's excellent documentary series *Born To Be Different*, along with tuberous sclerosis, arthrogryposis, spina bifida, achondroplasia and Down's.

The three programmes told the human stories of six families each bringing up a disabled child. The series made somewhat agonising viewing but was ultimately life affirming, making me realise something of what my own parents must have gone through when I had polio aged five months.

The boot was on the other foot with ITV1's heartening documentary *Real Life: Unfit Parents?* which introduced us to Tracey and Mark who, despite their mild to moderate learning difficulties, seem to be making a good fist of bringing up their gorgeous baby Louis with support from Essex social services department. When asked their secret, Tracey replied "team effort and plenty of nookie". Sounds good to me.

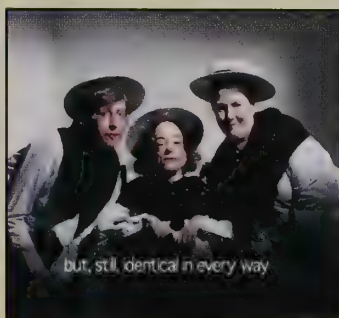
It was encouraging to see the BBC *Six o'clock News* running a two part story about the widespread abuse of blue disabled parking badges. Apparently they're changing hands for hundreds of pounds, particularly in London, so keep yours close to your chest.

Don't miss *Meet the Jacksons* on BBC2, 30 July. Single mum Jacqui Jackson has seven children and all four boys have a form of autism. 14-year-old Luke – a previous DN columnist – is charming and articulate and wrote his first book when he was 13 (see DN April 2003). He has Asperger's syndrome and his video diary style presentation gives a rare insight into life on the autistic spectrum for him and his brothers.

● Look out for programs in the forthcoming ITV1 Carlton series *Changing Attitudes*, which aim to do just that. It features documentaries on people living with, or affected by, disability. Programming varies around the country, but highlights include *One in Six* (Wales) running in July, *Maresa's New World* (Central) on 14 August and *It's our London*, on 28 August.

**Jane Shepherd**

## Coming up



The year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival looks set to roll with a wide range of disability-related performances. First up is the comedy troupe The Nasty Girls (above), who have some raunchy fun in *Molotov Crichtail* – probably not for the mild-mannered comedy fan. Meanwhile, Julie MacNamara puts on *Pig Tales*, the story of a female child raised as a boy.

On a family-oriented note, Sharon Neill sends out messages from loved ones in the spiritual world to reassure us that a biological death is not the end.

The Northern Star Theatre Company will perform *Scenes Unseen*, a series of sketches that range in styles from naturalism to absurdity to explore attitudes towards disability.

Comedian Adam Hill returns with new humour, while Lawrence Clarke vents rage on Esther Rantzen and Jimmy Saville in the *All-Star Charity Show*, a sardonic look at disability charities. *Too Much the Sun*, performed by Green Room productions, promises a rare combination of "storytelling, epilepsy, seafaring, lockpicking, and espionage".

For those who love to compare, two productions of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* go neck and neck on the theatre circuit.

To wind things up, Rattlesnake Theatre Company will perform the *Cripple of Inishmann*, about a disabled man whose chances for escape from the egg-breaking inhabitants of

Inishmann suddenly seem possible by way of a Hollywood casting agent.

For dates, times and venue information, including access, go to [www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com) or phone 0131 226 0000.



If Edinburgh is a bit out of the way, Women in Tune are holding the sixth annual Women's music festival near Lampeter, West Wales, from 20-26 August. Music workshops and performances for women of all ages and musical abilities, including disability arts cabarets and performances. Folk, jazz, drum n' bass and world music are all showcased. Tel: 01158 650390, for access enquiries: 01570 493356.



*Whose I is it anyway?*, an exhibition of photographs, paintings and ceramics by people with autism, will run at the Millinery Works Gallery, London from 30 July-10 August. Tel: 020 7359 2019, [www.millineryworks.co.uk](http://www.millineryworks.co.uk)

★★★★ excellent    ★★★ very good    ★★ good    ★ OK    ☆ poor

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# Cash in on change

Ongoing innovations are making it easier and safer to bank without leaving your home. Dan Batten investigates the options



SAM GILLESPIE

Interest rates, account balances and bill payments aren't the stuff of stimulating conversation. But banking is one thing we all have to spend time on at some point. Luckily, it's not the time-consuming drag it used to be.

Developments in digital technology, including the internet, have altered banking forever.

Developed with speed and convenience in mind, these advances are hugely beneficial to many disabled people who find queuing or getting to the bank or building society difficult. And, unlike a conventional branch, services are available all day, every day.

## Telephone

One of the most convenient ways to bank is by using the humble telephone. Banking by phone is a boon if you find it hard to get out or have limited time on your hands.

All major high street banks offer this service, with access just a phonecall away. You will

need a touch tone phone to activate automated services by following recorded instructions. Then you can perform transactions using your phone keypad, check your balance and transfer money between accounts.

If you want to do something more complex, or just prefer to deal with a live voice, you can speak to a customer advisor at any time of day, with more senior relationship managers on hand during office hours. Be warned though: at busy times, you may be kept on hold for some time.

Dealing with her money on the phone is the perfect solution for Sue Roberts. Sue has a visual impairment and finds reading statements difficult. She uses the phone to check her balances. "It's much easier for me than straining to read a sheet, and if I need to double check anything I can go through it with an advisor," says Sue. "The only downside is too much seems to go out and not enough comes in!"

## TV & internet

If the idea of discussing your finances on the phone bugs you, and you have access to the internet or digital TV, then you might consider accessing online or TV banking facilities.

Registering to manage your financial affairs is simple and can be done online, by phone, or at your branch. If you apply online for a card based account, you will be registered for e-banking services automatically.

Once you've logged in and have started managing your money online, the benefits become obvious. Although TV banking services are still quite basic, e-banking facilities are often more comprehensive, allowing you to pay bills, make or cancel personal payments and even apply for overdrafts.

Besides the fact that you can access online services 24-7, another advantage is that you can take as much time as you need to sort your finances out.

Charles Foster, who is deaf, uses Abbey National's online

service, as he can do things at his own pace.

"When I have to use a counter service and talk to someone face to face, it can be quite difficult to get my point across. And even though I don't hear anything, there's always the feeling that a queue is building behind me and people are getting frustrated at waiting," says Charles.

"With online services, I don't have worries about communicating or holding people up. It's very liberating," he adds.

One thing that can put people off using e-banking is the thought of personal details floating around in cyberspace at the mercy of e-thieves.

But this shouldn't worry you. Over the past few years, online security has been tightened, with banks and building societies using hi-tech software protection to guard against fraud.

## The future is now

Although there's much you can do from home, you may still

need to buy things when you're out using a credit or debit card. But if you have a signature that varies or find it impossible to sign your name, this can be tough. By the end of 2004, signing a paper receipt to confirm a transaction will be a thing of the past, due to a new system called Chip and PIN.

New credit and debit cards will do away with the magnetic strip that holds details, including your name and card number, and condense it into a chip. It also holds other features that make card fraud more difficult and expensive; good news for the safety of your cash.

Now for more good news. The reason you'll never need to sign your name again is because instead of swiping your card and putting your mark on a receipt, a machine with a numeric keypad will read your card. In the same way you punch your pin into a cashpoint machine, you will enter your four digits to confirm your transaction.

Although the Chip and PIN system will be easier to use for most, there is still potential for exclusion. Joanne Clarke has cerebral palsy and does not have difficulty reproducing her signature, but she does have problems using keypads. "I prefer to withdraw cash at a branch counter. If I do use a machine, a friend has to be with me to enter my pin as I can't press the keys," says Joanne.

Joanne is concerned about how she will manage when the new system comes in, as she relies on signing for things and finds handling cash difficult. "I don't like the idea of telling a shop assistant my pin, and I won't always have someone with me to help," she says.

But the Chip and PIN developers told *DN* that these kind of problems were easily solvable on a case by case basis and that those worried about the technology should talk with their bank.

With so many options available, the world of banking is becoming more accessible all the time. So check out one of the new services mentioned above: you may just hit the jackpot and find one that's right for you.



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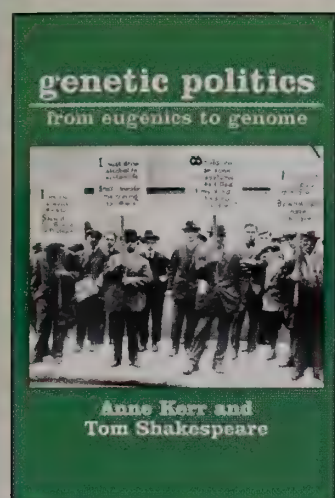
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Looking for something to read on holiday that isn't Harry Potter? *DN* has something for everyone



**Genetic Politics: From Eugenics to Genome**  
Anne Kerr and Tom Shakespeare, editors  
New Clarion, £15.49

**T**his strongly argued work aims to assist the general reader to think about genetics in a social context.

The first half deals with early twentieth century eugenic theories and practices, with case studies drawn from the right (Nazi Germany) and left

(Scandinavia) of the political spectrum.

While the authors criticise eugenicists for putting the collective good above the individual and for ensuring class superiority and racial "purity", they do not baulk at showing the positive contributions made to genetics and psychology.

The second half deals with the implications of human genomics (mapping the human genetic code). Operating with a social model of disability, the authors cast doubt upon the distinction between perceiving eugenics as a tool for enforced population cleansing, and contemporary genetic screening for disease, which can "improve" a population's genetic health.

Rather than demonise geneticists, the authors argue that the views many hold about the desirability of terminating "imperfect" fetuses are widely held, largely due to a refusal to listen to disabled people. And this is because of the higher

values placed upon technical knowledge and "public opinion" over lived experience.

In so doing, they demonstrate how the eugenic viewpoint still functions within genomics, even if the emphasis superficially shifts from the collective good to individual choice. This, they argue, leads to eugenics sneaking in through the back door, rather than being enshrined in legislation.

The detail provided leads to a subtle account of the links between eugenics and genomics, but some outlines of opposing positions are markedly reductive – I occasionally wondered whether I would have found so much to agree with if I did not already hold a similar position.

Nonetheless, this is an important book, containing a wealth of information presented in a very readable format. Highly recommended.

**John Appleby**

Stroebel, and a French girl, Catherine, in wartime France. As their relationship becomes common knowledge, she is ostracised by all but a few members of her family and friends.

From a disability perspective, two characters are of interest. One is Gerhardt, Klaus' brother, who has a learning disability, and is the first to become aware of what the Nazis are doing in the camps.

He finds it difficult to communicate this knowledge, and hangs himself, leading Klaus to do all he can to help others avoid the camps.

As a character, Gerhardt lacks credibility. We are told his family hid his disability because they

knew the regime would not look kindly upon him. But no one seemed to notice he was disabled when he was called up as a camp guard!

Another character becomes disabled after shattering his legs in an accident. It is easy to baulk at some of the language relating to disability, but it is a faithful reflection of the time.

Although the book feels contrived in parts, many characters are sensitively drawn, so that it is easy to empathise with their dilemmas. If you are prepared to suppress irritation in parts, I would recommend this read.

**Rachel Wilson**

halves. The first half was reading and learning about my sons on every page. Although I would say I have a fair understanding of autism, this book proved that I still had a great deal to learn.

Gerland writes so clearly and paints such a vivid picture that it would be impossible for parents and professionals not to learn something valuable. I would like to see her book handed out to every parent of a newly diagnosed child with autism and every mainstream teacher in the UK who has a child with autism in their class.

The second time I read it, I read her own story. It cannot fail to move you, even if you have no knowledge or background of autism. Her

family didn't either, and that led to a very frightening and frustrating life. Her sister was the only person who accepted her, and even she took the first chance to escape, leaving Gunilla to cope and care for an alcoholic mother who had been deserted by their father.

Yet despite everything that life threw at her, including a very late diagnosis, Gerland proves that people with autism can make their way in life and have a great deal to offer – they are "real people".

If I could recommend one book to promote the understanding of high functioning autism and Asperger's syndrome, it would be this book – it is excellent.

**Carole Barber**



**A Single Step**  
Heather Mills McCartney  
Warner, £14.96

**A**ll biographies tend to be shaped via omission of some events and embellishment of others. However, it has been widely reported that Heather Mills McCartney's autobiography partakes of this trait more than most – enhancing the account of horrors surmounted in early life, and omitting many details of her reputed rise to success as a model.

The tale she tells is one of a determined spirit who overcame every obstacle, including the loss of a leg in 1993, from which she managed to bounce back up and become the media personality and highly effective charity campaigner that she is today.

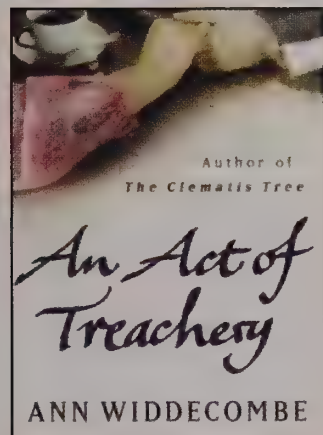
It may be because she wants the book to be

inspirational that Mills omits trauma in favour of presenting adversity as an object lesson in practicality and self-sufficiency. However, this just made her story seem flat and uninteresting: my own near-death experience as a result of being hit by a car leads me to believe that trauma plays a defining role in such events.

She hardly dwells upon the cosmetic effect of losing her leg, despite her preoccupation with beauty. Given her chosen career as a swimsuit model, this is hardly surprising, but it seems strange that she came to terms with amputation after a brief cry in a hospital toilet.

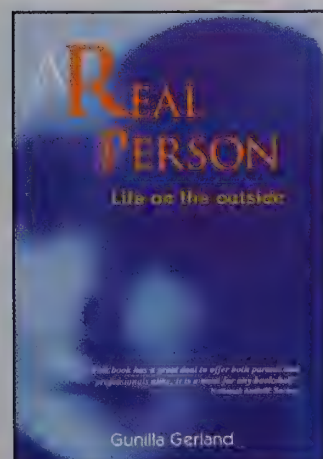
In contrast, she constantly mentions the size of her breasts, and how having them surgically reduced was life-enhancing (interestingly, whilst there are many photographs of her after the accident, there appear to be none prior to the breast reduction). Likewise, what should be an absorbing tale of how her charitable operations developed is reduced to "Heather meets some famous people and sorts problems out".

The book culminates in a Mills and Boon style account of her relationship with Paul McCartney. I don't need to be told that the man responsible for "Yesterday" is a hopeless romantic, but I would like to know how she really felt about losing her leg. (JA)



**An Act of Treachery**  
Ann Widdecombe  
Orion Paperback, £6.99

**A**n Act of Treachery is the story of a love affair between a German officer, Klaus von



**A Real Person: Life on the Outside**  
Gunilla Gerland,  
Souvenir, £12.99

**A**s the parent of two autistic sons, I had to read this book twice. For me, this is a book of two

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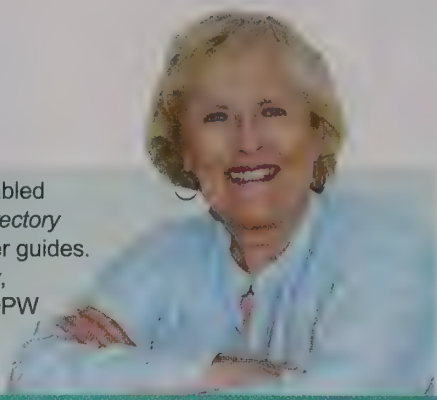


ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

# Dear Ann

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Ann Darnbrough, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People* and other guides. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to [editor@disabilitynow.org.uk](mailto:editor@disabilitynow.org.uk)



## Beating boredom

**M**y father, who is severely disabled, is now in hospital on life-support equipment. He is unable to move or speak, but I can tell he is aware of what is going on around him. By questioning him and watching the response in his eyes, I have discerned he is bored. Can you make any suggestions as to how I can try to relieve his boredom?

Cathy

Not an easy question to answer, but the most obvious idea – and the only one I can come up with – seems to me the most likely to really help. This is simply to fix up a personal television over his bed and make sure it gets turned on for his favourite programmes.

If he likes football and certain soaps, he would probably be keen to know what is happening in his favourite sport and to know the storylines of the soap characters.

But it's a good idea not to have the television on all the time – that could mean even more boredom.

### Not on my bus!

**A**s a volunteer mini bus driver, I understand the problems of transporting electric wheelchairs and scooters when there is no means of securing them to the floor. There is also the possibility of acid leaking from the batteries in the event of an accident. This could be difficult in an insurance claim.

So, except for very short journeys, I choose not to convey loose wheelchairs on board.

Doug, Brentwood

Many thanks for sharing with us your experience of transporting electric wheelchairs and scooters.

As you know, pavement scooters are not intended to

be carried on other vehicles, because they may be difficult, or impossible, to clamp down. Also, the bylaw requirements for carrying wheelchairs and scooters vary considerably between local authorities. Fortunately, I am told that few batteries have acid now.

You may find it helpful to put disabled people who need more mobility advice in touch with MAVIS (Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service).

### Seeking satisfaction

**I** am a man with multiple sclerosis and I don't have a partner at the present time. I am concerned that because of the progression of MS, my love life will become non-existent. Why should anyone be

interested in me if I can't perform adequately?

Reg, Southampton

Whatever you do, don't give up. Many of these problems can be overcome. MS specialist, Dr Randell Schapiro says:

"Healthy sexuality involves mutuality, warmth, tenderness, and love – not just genital contact! Stroking, kissing, looking, holding, talking sexy – these can all give the pleasure of sex without requiring intercourse. By exploring the body for responsive areas, even quadriplegics can often enjoy good sex lives. So people with MS definitely can

find pleasure."

He continues: "Foot rubs, holding hands, and hugging should feel like safe ways to start enjoying physical pleasure."

As to finding a partner, once you start looking, you may be amazed how many good potential partners are out there, including those with MS. Of course, you have to get out and about to find women with similar interests to your own and then take it from there. It has been said that 90 per cent

of finding someone is making yourself available.

When you're looking for a partner, don't forget the personal ads in *DN* and lots of other places, including the net. You can woo with words and then decide to meet whenever you choose. All of a sudden, personal ads have lost their tarnish of hopelessness.

● For urgent personal questions, you can contact *DN's* telephone counsellor, Lyn Berwick on 01787 882111

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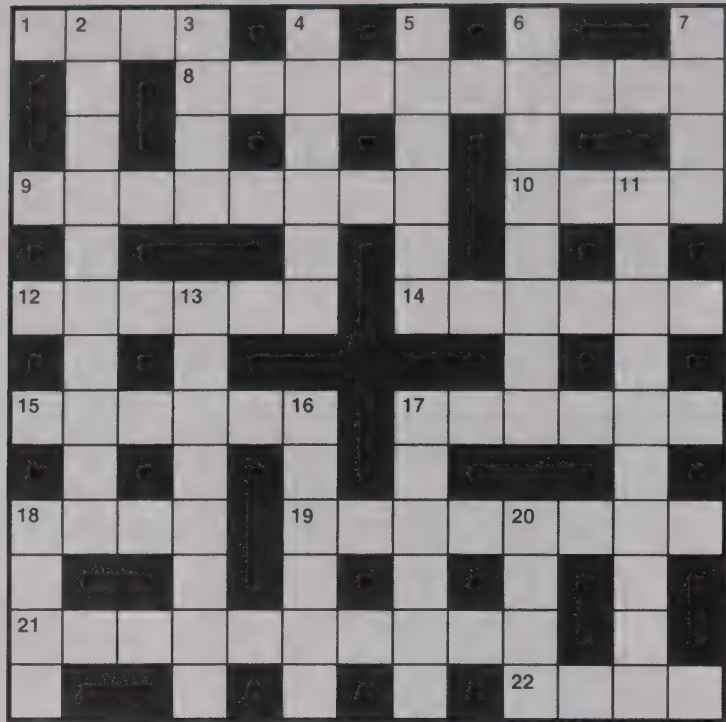


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**ACROSS**

- 1. Skin complaint involving red pimples (4)
- 8. People who are made to take the blame (10)
- 9. See 15 Across
- 10. Trees with rough, serrated leaves (4)
- 12. Large prawns (6)
- 14. City which will host the next Olympic Games (6)
- 15. And 9 Across, 6 Down. SIT, a new consortium of charities (6,8,8)
- 17. This bird was found in the Aztec civilization in Mexico when the country was discovered in 1518 (6)
- 18. Sheltered place where a wild animal rests or eats (4)
- 19. Huge (8)
- 21. IT charity which is looking at airlines, supermarkets and newspapers to find out how accessible their websites are to disabled people (10)
- 22. Sequence of six deliveries in cricket (4)

**DOWN**

- 2. Symbol of plenty consisting of a goat's horn overflowing with flowers, fruit and corn (10)
- 3. In the Bible, he sold his birthright to his brother Jacob (4)
- 4. One of the Society Islands in the South Pacific, its capital is Papeete (6)
- 5. Iran's former name (6)
- 6. See 15 Across
- 7. Small, poisonous vipers (4)
- 11. The Disability Sport England Mini Games for 7-12 year olds were held at Stoke \_\_\_\_ (10)
- 13. Dogs of no definable breed (8)
- 16. City \_\_\_\_, a famous Charlie Chaplin movie (6)
- 17. He was manager of Fulham for most of last season (6)
- 18. Heavy, soft, grey, metallic element, atomic number 82 (4)
- 20. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (4)

CROSSWORD BY JIM MCLAREN  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM GILLESPIE  
ANSWERS ON PAGE 33

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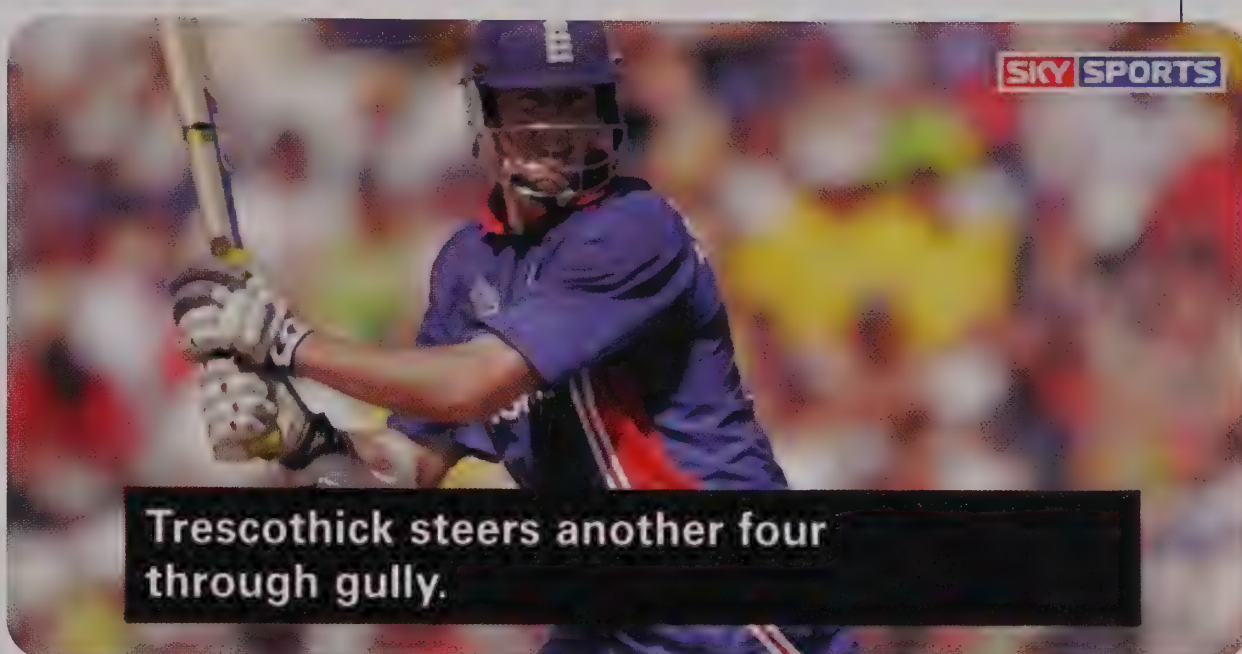


# Sky launches new disability service

Thousands of disabled subscribers to Sky digital, the UK's most popular digital television service, are set to benefit from improved customer service following the launch in June of a dedicated Disability Service Team. Based at Sky's customer contact centre at Dunfermline, the Sky Disability Service Team provides an easy-to-use one-stop shop that can respond to queries from disabled customers seven days a week.

The launch of the initiative took place on 12th June and coincided with an event organised by the Broadcasting and Creative Industries' Disability Network (BCIDN) and attended by Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell.

The one-stop shop service has been designed to be fully accessible. Direct access to the Disability Service Team for people who find the telephone difficult to use has been improved with the installation of a text phone and an email service. Each member of Sky's Disability Service Team, which includes a number of disabled employees, has received disability awareness training to help them to understand and respond to the needs of disabled customers.



Although we recognise that there is still much to achieve, we have made real progress in the 12 months since the publication of our first disability action plan."

Kay explains that access to information is an important part of Sky's new approach to disability. "We have launched a dedicated web site that will help keep people updated on our services," she says. "However we know that there can be access issues for disabled people using the web, so Sky Online has implemented an access auditing process and is working to raise awareness of the issues and to improve accessibility."

Improved access to programme services is another focus of Sky's disability strategy. "We now subtitle 45,000 hours of programmes per year on Sky channels," says Kay. "This includes at least 50 per cent of each day's output per day on Sky One and Sky News Bulletins and every movie broadcast on Sky Box Office." In addition, 6.7 million Sky digital households have access to more than 3,000 hours of audio described programmes on Sky channels. Kay explains that Sky is currently the only television company that offers audio description for satellite viewers. "We are encouraging other broadcasters to use the audio description capability that we have built into every Sky digibox. The public service broadcasters, for instance are presently transmitting their audio described programmes only to a very small number of homes via the digital terrestrial platform, when it could be simultaneously broadcast to millions of satellite homes using the technology we

already have in place".

So how does Sky intend to improve choice and opportunity for disabled people in the future? Kay says the company is committed to involving disabled people in this ongoing process. "We have established customer focus groups, enabling disabled people with a range of impairments to experience Sky services and to give us feedback on what they would like to see improve," she says. "We have also been listening to organisations for disabled people and experts in this field. This consultation exercise raised our awareness on a range of concerns and helped develop the Sky disability strategy."

Kay concludes: "Disabled people should account for a larger segment of our customer base. Promoting Sky services and delivering excellence in customer service for disabled people makes good business sense."

As part of this drive to deliver services to more disabled viewers, Sky is offering viewers the chance to sign up for Sky digital and pay just £1 for standard installation (normally £60) when they subscribe to a Sky World package before 31 August 2003.

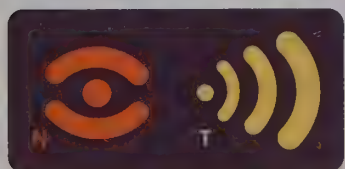
To contact Sky's Disability Service Team, customers should call 08705 66 33 33, text phone 08702 40 19 10 or email [disability@sky.com](mailto:disability@sky.com).

To obtain a copy of Sky's Disability Strategy 2003, call Kay Allen, Disability Manager on 020 7705 3675 or [kay.allen@bskyb.com](mailto:kay.allen@bskyb.com)



In addition, Sky is improving the provision of printed material such as customer letters, statements and subscription forms in alternative media such as Braille, audio and large print. For the first time, this now includes publication of Sky The Magazine in audio format.

Kay Allen, BskyB's Disability Manager, says: "The launch of the Sky disability service team demonstrates Sky's continuing commitment to extending the opportunities available to disabled people.



**sky**



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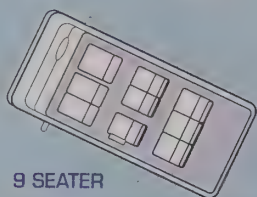
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8 SEATER



8 SEATER



9 SEATER



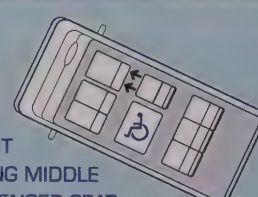
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\* Price shown is for 1.9 D SX model.

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## Publications

**Ricability** has published *Wheels Within Wheels*, a guide to using a wheelchair on public transport. The guide tells you what access details you can expect from newer trains, coaches, buses and taxis, gives information on how to find where accessible public transport services run and lists key dimensions of wheelchairs available in the UK and which will fit onto public transport without difficulty. Large SAE to Ricability, 30 Angel Gate, City Road, London EC1V 2P. Email: mail@ricability.org.uk

**Homepoint, Communities Scotland and the Scottish Executive** have published *My House*, a free booklet to help people with learning disabilities understand the Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement. The booklet gives information on housing issues including things to ask for before signing a tenancy agreement, dealing with difficult neighbours, repairs and consultation about rent levels. A text version is available in a number of languages from the Homepoint website. Contact Homepoint,

tel: 0131 313 0044, website: www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk

**Epilepsy Action** has published *New to Epilepsy – a Parent's Guide*. Aimed at parents who have just had a child diagnosed with epilepsy, the guide looks at how epilepsy is diagnosed and treated, basic first aid, safety education and benefit entitlement. Further information sources for topics discussed in the guide are also given. Free. Tel: 0800 800 5050 or order from www.epilepsy.org.uk

## What's on

**Incontact** will hold Bladder and Bowel Problems – Breaking the Taboo, University of Derby, 30-31 August. The conference will feature talks and workshops looking at alternative therapies, the menopause and a healthy bladder, Pilates power and the pelvic floor, and food and drink for healthy bladder and bowels. Specialists with information on new products, services and treatments will be on hand throughout the weekend. To book a place, tel: 0870 770 3246, email: info@incontact.org

**Prodisca** will hold I feel: I think, the experience of disabled children who have been emotionally abused and neglected, Scarman House,

Warwick University, 14-15 November. Aimed at anyone working with disabled children, the conference will look at research into attachment, resilience, self-esteem and identity and its application to disabled children. Workshops and papers will explore other issues that impact on disabled children's emotional and psychological well being. Tel/fax 01428 6741425, email: info@in-trac.co.uk

## Drop in service

**Centre 404**, formerly Islington Mencap, hold Moving Into the Mainstream, Tuesdays 12-2pm. This new drop in session offers educational and professional advice for people with learning disabilities, access to mainstream inclusion in classes or training, and taster sessions on subjects including crafts, dance, computers and employment skills. Contact Sara, tel: 020 7607 8762.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**ACROSS:** 1. Acne 8. Scapegoats 9. Injuries 10. Elms 12. Scampi 14. Athens 15. Spinal 17. Turkey 18. Lair 19. Gigantic 21. AbilityNet 22. Over

**DOWN:** 2. Cornucopia 3. Esau 4. Tahiti 5. Persia 6. Together 7. Asps 11. Mandeville 13. Mongrels 16. Lights 17. Tigana 18. Lead 20. NATO

# HEAD DOWN UNDER



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How often? .....

Favourite destination? .....

Have you ever been on a cruise? Yes ☐ No ☐

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2. Discounts and special offers will apply to the member and all other parties booking under the same lead name/party organiser, unless expressly indicated otherwise in the relevant DN Travel Club offer.
3. Membership of the DN Travel Club will be valid as long as the DN Travel Club remains in operation. In the event of cessation of the DN Travel Club, one month's notice will be given in *Disability Now*.
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# DN disabilitynow

September 2003

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**Ashwellthorpe Hall Hotel** is an historic Elizabethan manor house full of charm and character. The hotel is fully accessible with excellent and extensive facilities particularly for people with severe disabilities (e.g. ceiling hoists) whilst retaining all the services and ambience of an ordinary hotel. Everyone is assured of a warm and friendly welcome. Good food a speciality.

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Norwich, Norfolk, NR16 1EX  
Email: [book@ashwellthorpehall.org.uk](mailto:book@ashwellthorpehall.org.uk)  
See us at: [www.ashwellthorpehall.org.uk](http://www.ashwellthorpehall.org.uk)

**Willow Cottage - The Black Isle, 5 mins drive Inverness.**  
Beautifully equipped, Tourist Board 3 stars with Disability Award 2.  
1 double, 1 twin, both ensuite. Situated on a working croft amid lovely scenery with wildlife park close by. Moray Firth dolphins, kites, buzzards, deer etc. and our Nessie! Inverness offers good food, cinema, theatre etc.  
Brochure/details, tel: 01463 731455, website: [www.highlanddisabledcottageholidays.co.uk](http://www.highlanddisabledcottageholidays.co.uk)

**CYPRUS - Paphos & Polis Villas/cottages, some "disabled friendly" for 2-10 persons.**  
Own pools. Phone Irene: 020 8440 6219 [www.irisvillas.com](http://www.irisvillas.com)

**Near Salisbury** - newly converted stable block self-catering units. Ground floor: 1 double/twin bedroom en-suite wheel-in shower. Upstairs 1 double, 1 single, shower room. Open plan kitchen & living room. Patio & shared garden. ETB category 2, 4-star highly commended. Non-smoking. Prices from £195 pw. Available all year. Tel: 01722 349002, e-mail: [mail@old-stables.co.uk](mailto:mail@old-stables.co.uk), [www.old-stables.co.uk](http://www.old-stables.co.uk)

**Brittany Cottage** to let. Adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details **C. Hodgson**. Tel (01924) 499220.

**DISCLAIMER - DN is not responsible for claims made in the adverts it prints. Readers are advised to check claims with advertisers before relying on them.**



• Recruitment (on pages 36 to 38)

ENVIRONMENT

# Access Officer

HOVE TOWN HALL, HOVE

£21,282 - £24,726 PA PRO RATA - 18.5 HRS/WK

We are seeking an experienced and knowledgeable Access Officer to work at our Hove offices. A full understanding of best practice in disabled access and the implementation of the DDA is essential. Applicants should be able to initiate action to secure access for all, promote best practice in access and advise on facilities for people with sensory impairment or physical disability throughout the City of Brighton & Hove. ■ For an informal discussion call Rob Fraser on 01273 292380.

For further details and to download an application form visit [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk) ■ Alternatively contact the Recruitment Team (remember to quote the job reference number and where you saw the advert). ■ By email at: [jobs@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:jobs@brighton-hove.gov.uk) ■ By phone on (01273) 292284 (24 hour answer service). ■ A Minicom service is available if you have hearing or speech difficulties on (01273) 295100.



Brighton & Hove

BUILDING A WORKFORCE THAT VALUES THE DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY.



# Site Operations Manager

## Contact/Call Centre

c.£30,000 + Car

Aberdeen

*As one of 11 business streams within the national Remploy Organisation - Britain's leading provider of employment opportunities for disabled people - Offiscope is a fast developing multi-site operation, aiming to become the 1st choice partner for outsourced office services to internal and external customers across the UK.*

Responsible for overseeing all day to day operations on this established site, your brief will focus on delivering measurable improvements across the key result areas of service level agreements, customer satisfaction, reporting requirements, deadlines and cost control.

It's a classic management role, with profit and loss accountability, where you'll lead by example, motivating and developing a dedicated in-house team to achieve challenging business objectives. Successful candidates will also be responsible for manufacturing and assembly processes on site.

From an operational background and with at least 3 years' management experience in a high volume contact/call centre environment, you're likely to be of graduate calibre and must have a high degree of IT competency, including knowledge of related operating systems.

If that's backed by proven sales capability, along with a knowledge of generating tenders and sound budgetary control, then you can look forward to a rewarding future in a major national organisation.

To apply, please write with CV and salary details to: Marie Jarvis, HR Department, Remploy Limited, Britannia Road, Banbury, Oxon OX16 5DP.

Closing date: Monday 11th August 2003.

# Remploy

Offiscope

Opportunity & Enterprise - Working Together



Queen Elizabeth's Foundation

PROMOTING EQUALITY FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Registered Charity No 251051

Queen Elizabeth's Foundation  
advertises job vacancies on  
its website [www.qefd.org](http://www.qefd.org)



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



# Project Administrator

(£16,410 - 18,387)

Shape pioneers the active involvement of disabled, deaf and older people in the arts and cultural industries. 2003 is European Year of Disabled People. To highlight the year, Shape has launched a new programme of activities taking place in Greater London and across the UK. We will also be working towards a merger with Artsline, the information service for disabled people in London.

To help us achieve our aims at this exciting time we are seeking a Project Administrator to work five days per week on a fixed term contract until 31 March 2004. Thereafter there may be an opportunity to apply for a permanent role in the merged organisation.

This post has two main areas of responsibility:

- to provide access support for 2-3 days per week to the Shape Arts Officer in the Hammersmith Office [full training will be provided]
- to act as the central administrator for all Shape arts projects, providing administrative support to the arts officers and managing projects as appropriate.

Closing Date for all applications: 5pm Monday 11 August 2003.

For a job description and an application form please contact Chris Buck, Shape, 356 Holloway Road London N7 6PA, or download from [www.shapearts.org.uk](http://www.shapearts.org.uk) or email [info@shapearts.org.uk](mailto:info@shapearts.org.uk)

For an informal discussion about the post and areas of responsibility please contact:

Chris Buck, Administrator

[Chris@shapearts.org.uk](mailto:Chris@shapearts.org.uk) Tel: 020 7619 6160 (direct line)

Minicom: 020 7619 6161 Fax: 020 7619 6162

Shape is committed to equality and diversity in employment  
Information is available on disc, large print and on tape.

## HOW TO REPLY

To reply to a personal ad indicate the Box Number and mark the envelope Private and Confidential. If you do not it will be opened. Send it to DN, address on page 2.

## PERSONAL ADS

For personal ads, submit about 25 words and send a cheque or postal order for £20 payable to Disability Now with your ad. This is to help cover our costs.

## SEND US YOUR SMALLS...

...and make a big impression. Small ads in DN reach over 70,000 people for just £7 a line. All small ads must be paid for in advance. If you want to advertise, please use the form provided. Send it with a cheque for the total to Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

**PORTABLE 3-WHEEL** (Pride's Sonic) mobility scooter, 12 months old and only used once. Complete with 100% waterproof scooter cape, cost £1500 new, offers are invited. Tel: 01423 874072.

## • Accommodation

**2 COTTAGES, BRITTANY**, £70,000 for both. One, thatched, wheelchair adapted, the other cottage (adjacent): stone and slate. Very near shops and bus routes. Tel: 00 33 297560550 or email: [dennislangford@tiscali.fr](mailto:dennislangford@tiscali.fr)

**WHEELCHAIR FRIENDLY SPACIOUS**, detached 3 bedroomed bungalow with garage and wide, long drive and ramp. Large front and rear gardens, near park amenities and coast. Very flat resort, prove to make life easier. Once loved home, come and see how it can be a home for you. Highbridge, Burnham-on-Sea. Tel for details: 01278 784884 or 786772.

**SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE - FOUR** bedroom, two bathroom (one en suite) detached house in South Oxfordshire village. In addition, has ground floor extension to suit disabled person, comprising of large bedroom with built-in low level furniture, luxury bathroom with roll-in shower, bath with chair lift and Clos-o-mat toilet. All access ramped to nice garden and side entrance to drive which holds min four cars. Must be seen. £360,000. Tel: 01844 354956.

## • Household/family

**NEW HYDRAULIC CONTROLLED** adjustable hospital bed complete with mattress and safety bars, £500 ono. Tel: 02380 894110.

**STANNAH RISE/RECLINER** chair, complete massage function in 4 different positions - neck, back, feet and ankles. Rose velour colour, firm and comfortable. In very good condition, virtually unused. Cost £2,000, £600 ono. Tel: 01527 574922.

**LA-Z-BOY SELF LIFT** electric chair, immaculate condition, tapestry upholstery. Self lift and reclining. £500. Electric adjustable bed, manufactured by Concern for Comfort. Single divan. In immaculate condition with brand new mattress (costing £400). Cost new £3,000+, asking £500. Tel: 01424 429033 (Hastings).

Cont'd pg 38

London Borough of Bromley Social Services & Housing

In partnership with:-

The Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment (PDSI) Forum  
and Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment Partnership Group

# Information Project Manager

£24,870 - £26,241 p.a.

(pro-rata for 18 hours per week)

Short-term contract until 31 March 2005

We are looking for a highly motivated person, to develop an information strategy that will enable people with disabilities to be informed and gain knowledge about services and opportunities available to them in Bromley.

Interested? If so, you will need relevant experience in:

- Project Management
- Reviewing and evaluating information for content and format appropriate to this user group
- Liaising with stakeholders to prepare and implement the strategy
- Using information technology.

In addition, you will require excellent communication skills, both written and oral, and an understanding of the Disability Discrimination Act. (Assistance can be given if there are difficulties in relation to communication skills due to a disability).

We can provide support and guidance via an energetic PDSI forum.

Applications will be positively welcomed from people with disabilities.

For an application form and information pack please contact 020 8313 4449 (24 hr answer service) or e-mail [jobs@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:jobs@bromley.gov.uk) Alternatively you can write to the London Borough of Bromley, Customer Service Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH.

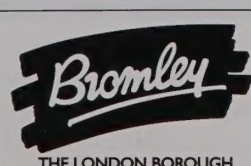
Please quote reference: IPM

Closing date: 8 August 2003.

[www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk)



Committed to achieving equal opportunities  
in employment and service delivery





## • Recruitment (on pages 36 to 38)



COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Access Advisor****Salary £19,970 to £23,640 inclusive**

As part of the Corporation of London's Access Team, you will ensure that necessary action is taken to meet the needs of disabled people in relation to the design of buildings and the external environment in the City of London, with the aim of achieving an 'Accessible City for all'.

Responsibilities will include:

- Appraising planning applications
- Undertaking access audits
- Promoting inclusive design across the City of London.

You should be committed to improving access and to ensuring that disabled people are able to assume an independent role in society. Experience and understanding of disability issues are necessary, along with good written and verbal communication skills. Appropriate training will be provided.

For an informal discussion, please contact Sue Lines (Monday to Thursday) on 020 7332 3795.

For a recruitment pack contact the Personnel and Administration Manager, Department of Community Services, Corporation of London, PO Box 270, Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ; Telephone 020 7332 1651 24-hour answerphone.

Closing date: Friday, 15th August 2003.

recruitment.communityservices@corpoflondon.gov.uk

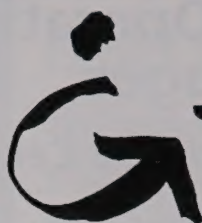


INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**The Corporation is committed to Equal Opportunities and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.**

**A no smoking policy is in operation.**

**John Grooms Housing Association****Advocacy Worker****c£22,000-24,000**

John Grooms Housing Association is the leading provider of wheelchair housing in the country and intends to pursue a vigorous approach to meeting the housing needs of physically disabled people.

To help us meet this ambitious target we require a talented advocacy worker to ensure that key opinion formers in government, business as well as social and private housing sectors are aware of the importance of our work.

Working within the Communications Team you will devise, implement and deliver policy campaigns, ensuring that our messages reach our target audiences.

As part of our commitment to equality, John Grooms particularly encourages applications from disabled people.

We offer Stakeholders Pension Scheme and 25 days annual leave. For an application pack please call the recruitment line on 020 7452 2016 (24-hour answer phone), quoting the job title, or e-mail recruit@johngrooms.org.uk or fax us on 020 7452 2001 (CVs will not be accepted). John Grooms Housing Association, 50 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4XQ.

Closing Date: 14 August 2003

Interviews to be held early September 2003



## • Ramps

**RAMPS, LIGHT STRONG** aluminium, 400lb load, non slip, retracts into 3 and fits into carry bag. Never been used, £99 post paid. Tel: 01205 361953.

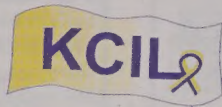
## • Combined

**FIAT FIORINO 1.7TD**, 22k miles, blue, R reg. Sale due to bereavement, tax October, MOT November 02. Rear ramp, electric chair straps. Vgc. Also, Mangar Freestyle 2000, dry battery with charger, powered backrest, extended armrest pads and infills. G80T hand control inside right arm rest, headrest. Good condition, Mangar discount first service and free demonstration and assessment to purchaser. £3,400 for car and £2,200 for chair or £4,800 ono for both. Tel: 0121 427 1271 (leave a message).

**STERLING ELITE 4** wheel 'scoota' (blue), purchased new 1996, little used. Complete with luxury seat and charger. 5 settings, max speed 8 mph, range on full charge 25 miles. £350 ono. Stannah stairlift, purchased 1996. Buyer removes. £50. Invacare manual wheelchair 200LT, new 1997, little used. Vgc, £75. Francesco rise/recliner chair with headrest. £50. Terry platform step lift. Hydraulically operated, installed 2000. Cost £4,300, buyer removes. £750. Flexmobil powered chair, high back, electric seat lift, single plate foot rest. Purchased October 2002, ex demo model, cost £2,750. Vgc, complete with charger. £1,500 ono. Full operational instruction with all goods. Tel: 07711 042680 (Derby).

## • Help

**DO YOU FANCY** Xmas/New Year in Palma Nova? Lively w/chair user needs enthusiastic Enabler. All expenses paid plus daily allowance. Please contact me soon. Box no: 249

**KINGSTON CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (KCIL)****EQUALITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER****NJC S01, Point 29, + OLW (£22,797)****Full-time (35 hours per week)**

A well-established organisation of disabled people, KCIL requires a disabled person as our new Equality Development Officer. We have identified the need to build better bridges with disabled people from black and minority ethnic communities (BMEC) in Kingston. This need has been recognised across the local voluntary and statutory sectors, resulting in just under three-years funding for this post, from the Partnership Fund.

**This is a brand new post, and will involve:**

- Identifying interested groups and individuals, addressing any barriers;
- Generating effective cross-sector partnerships;
- Developing more interest in services by the target groups;
- Creating an effective referral system across relevant local agencies;
- Developing a user forum.

**The post-holder will need to have:**

- Personal experience of living in a BME community;
- Experience of multi-agency work;
- Experience of encouraging cross-sector working;
- Personal experience of being a disabled person;
- Good communication skills;
- Fluent in at least one community language, as well as English.

For further details and an application pack (please state your preferred format: large print, audio, Braille) please telephone **020 8255 2444** (minicom) or fax us on **020 8255 2441**, or e-mail [robert.reilly@kcil.org.uk](mailto:robert.reilly@kcil.org.uk)

Please quote reference: EDO

Closing Date is: **1st August 2003** • Interview Date is: **8th August 2003**

**DEADLINES**

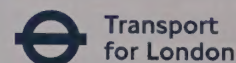
**Disability Now September 2003 published 30 August classified deadlines: Booking: 15 August. Copy: 19 August.**

**Can you drive the future?****Find out about career opportunities for women at Transport for London.**

Visit the 'Driving the Future' event.

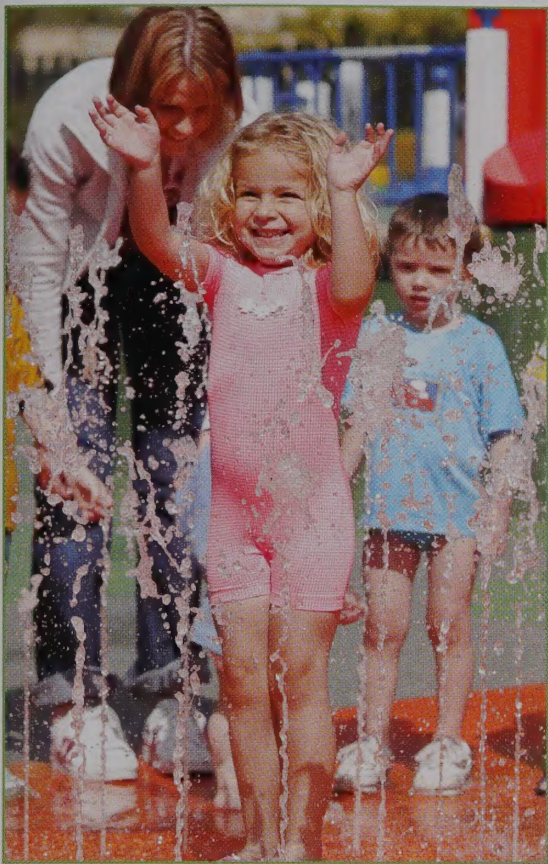
30 July, 11.30 - 19.30 at the DTI Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, SW1. For more details log on [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

MAYOR OF LONDON





## A WALK IN THE PARK



**A**t LEGOLAND® Windsor the entertainment is certainly hands-on. Children aged 2-12 can take to the road, soar through the skies and sail the seas in complete safety. With over 50 interactive rides, live shows, building workshops, driving schools and attractions, all set in 150 acres of beautiful parkland, LEGOLAND Windsor is a different sort of family theme park.

Speed into pole position on LEGO® Rocket Racers, tour Europe in a day in Miniland, build and test your own creations in The Imagination Centre, fly through Castleland with the Dragon and his Apprentice and even earn your very own LEGOLAND Driving Licence.

These are just a few of the many thrills of LEGOLAND Windsor, so for your chance to win one of three sets of family tickets, worth £85.80 each, just tick the LEGOLAND box in the entry form.



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## ROLLERCOASTER EXPERIENCE

**T**he UK's fastest changing thrill park is offering you the chance to win one of five family tickets, each worth £67. The new 2003 season promises an array of red hot thrills, white water rides and wind in the hair experiences.

Nemesis Inferno has arrived at Thorpe Park with all the raw adrenaline of the legendary Nemesis Inferno at Alton Towers, but with the temperature turned up! Leap into the thrill zone on Quantum, take in views of the Surrey scenery on Eclipse and welcome the return of Colossus, the world's first ten looping roller coaster.

These are just some of the fantastic rides that Thorpe Park has to offer so hurry and tick the relevant box in the entry form and return it to our Freepost address for your chance to win.

Booking and information line 0870 444 44 66 or visit [www.thorpepark.com](http://www.thorpepark.com)



## MUSIC MAKER



**T**he Music Box houses a wealth of percussion instruments in a handy, portable kit. This collection of musical instruments will encourage expression and interaction and help develop audio, visual and tactile skills in children. Music provides an opportunity for children to release energy in a safe, fun and enjoyable way. It lets them express their emotions and develop their self esteem.

Children can also learn through music what it is like to work together and share experiences by striking the lollipop drum, shaking the innovative star tambourines and clacking and tapping the frog castanets.

DN can offer one lucky reader the chance to win a Deluxe Music Box, worth £160. Just tick 'Music Box' in the entry form.

For further information about the Music Box contact Kirton Healthcare, freephone on 0800 212709 or visit [www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk](http://www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk)

**Music Box**

**kirton**

## to enter

Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send FOR

FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to: [elizabeth.cowley@scope.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.cowley@scope.org.uk)

☐ Legoland ☐ Thorpe Park ☐ Music Box



### terms & conditions

• closing date for entrants: 22.08.03 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with Thorpe Park, LEGOLAND Windsor and Kirton Healthcare. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐

## DN next month



DN gives its verdict on disability related performances at this year's Fringe Festival, including Julie McNamara's *Pig Tales* (left).

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 30 August.

### COUNT US IN

This year's education supplement checks out SENDA one year on, looks at "inclusion" in two metropolitan boroughs, visits an outstanding special needs school, asks disabled people what education worked for them and quizzes two ministers, Baroness Ashton and Margaret Hodge, about government policy.

### WANT TO BE A JOURNALIST?

DN surveys access to UK journalism courses

### DON'T BE SHY

DN finds out what's new in the incontinence field and where you can go for help

### EDINBURGH FRINGE

First reviews from Ruth Bailey

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**To the newsagent:** *Disability Now*, ISSN 0958-4676, is published monthly by Scope, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.

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The campaigning newspaper that puts you in the picture

# DAN

disabilitynow

£1.80 August 2003

Gee whizz!

Billy goes for world record

Earth summit  
Young people speak out

DAN's latest dare  
Major charities targeted



The New Look Citroen Berlingo fully converted now available on Motability 5yr Contract Hire

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[www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk](http://www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk)

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Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles